ATENEO DE MANILA LIBRARIES

Filipino wins $125,000 global environmental award

Story below, Col. I

Gov't upgrades facility to handle SARS cases

By Armand N. Nocum and Dona Z. Pazzibugan

FOUR negative-pressure rooms will be in operation within two weeks to beef up the Philippines' capacity to address the threat of the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome, health officials said yesterday.

GOV'T/A17

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

WHAT'S INSIDE

- **Meralco seeking higher rate increase** BUSINESS /B1
- **7 teeners drown in Laguna de Bay** METRO/A24
- **Weir wins Masters** SPORTS /A22

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War drawing to a close

GMA jumps gun, names new envoy to Baghdad

By Carlito Pablo and Cynthia Balana

JUMPING the gun on the rest of the world, President Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday announced the appointment of a new ambassador to Iraq—even as US-led coalition forces had yet to establish full control over the war-torn country and set up an interim government.

In a speech to the graduating class of the Philippine National Police Academy, the President said she was appointing businessman Jose C. Ibazeta as ambassador to Baghdad.

Her decision was in sync with a proposal of opposition leader Sen. Edgardo Angara, who urged the Macapagal administration yesterday to collect on "victory dividends" for its full support for the US-led war in Iraq.

Ibazeta's immediate task, the President said, was to "provide the ground support" for Philippine participation in humanitarian and reconstruction efforts in the war-torn country. The first batch of Filipino humanitarian workers and peacekeepers is set to leave next week.

The United States and Britain have pledged to let the United

GMA/A19

"ADOBO" is on the menu for the homecoming party of Fil-Am Army Specialist Joseph Hudson (center), says his Filipino mother. Hudson is flanked by Army Specialist Edgar Hernandez and Army Pfc. Patrick Miller. They all belong to the 507th Maintenance Co., and were held as POWs by Iraqi forces since March 23 when their convoy was ambushed in Nasiriya in southern Iraq. AP

THE WAR
DAY 26

Fil-Am often tells friends 'Ako Pilipino'

ALAMOGORDO, New Mexico—Aniceta Hudson is getting the best birthday present of her life. Her son, Army Specialist Joseph Hudson, 23, is alive and he's coming home.

That's the only thing I want—to know he's safe," the Philippine-born mother said after seeing images on television of her son smiling and waving from the back of a US troop transport truck.

"I'm going to fatten my boy up a bit with some chicken *adobo* and rice when he gets home," Aniceta was quoted by the New York Times as saying on Sunday.

Joseph was among seven prisoners of war found Sunday in Iraq after they spent three weeks in captivity.

His mother said Joseph would often tell his friends, "*Ako Pilipino* (I am Filipino)."

Joseph was one of 15 soldiers of the 507th Maintenance Company, based at Fort Bliss, Texas, who were ambushed March 23 near Nasiriyah in southern Iraq. Nine soldiers died in the attack while Joseph and five others from the unit were taken prisoner. One of the POWs, Pfc. Jessica Lynch, was rescued on April 1 from an Iraqi hospital in a daring commando raid.

Aniceta Hudson, who turns 52 on Wednesday, received word of her son's liberation during a pre-dawn phone call

FIL-AM/A19

US captures Saddam's hometown

BAGHDAD—The capture of the dusty hometown of Saddam Hussein, Tikrit, signaled that the 26-day-old conflict was drawing to a close and came as Washington intensified its war of words with Syria, saying Damascus may be harboring top Iraqi officials and chemical weapons. *(See story in The World, Page A14.)*

With virtually the whole country under US and British control, Marines stormed into Tikrit, which lies some 175 km north of Baghdad.

The United States has not yet discovered any weapons of mass destruction in Iraq and has only caught a couple of senior Iraqi leaders—with Saddam himself as elusive as ever.

After a fierce overnight bombardment by fighter jets and attack helicopters which targeted remnants of the battered Republican Guard, Marines entered the heart of the town soon after daybreak, meeting only sporadic resistance.

Al-Jazeera television broadcast live pictures of Marines walking through Tikrit, the last major center left to fall to US-led forces, as tanks took up positions in a central square.

"The town is completely closed, nobody is on the streets except for the Marines," Al-Jazeera's reporter in the town, Youssef al-Sharif, told Reuters.

But military officials at war headquarters in Qatar warned it could take time to secure the northern town.

"I can tell you that in Tikrit there's still some way to go before normalization and stabilization happens," said British Group Capt. Al Lockwood. "We expect to meet resistance in Tikrit from pockets of

WAR/A19

HERNANDEZ in his natural habitat: First Filipino to win what is considered the Nobel Prize of the environmental movement.

RP environmentalist wins $125,000 Goldman prize

A FILIPINO environmental activist who organized campaigns against waste incinerators in the Philippines is one of this year's seven recipients of a top environmental prize.

Von Hernandez, 36, coordinator of Greenpeace International's Toxics Campaign in Asia, was the winner from Asia of the Goldman Environmental Prize, often called the Nobel Prize of the environmental movement. The prize is awarded annually to grass-roots activists from six regions across the globe.

Hernandez, who is also a convenor of the Philippine Clean Air Coalition, is the first Filipino to win the award.

"Personally, I feel gratified and vindicated, having 'spearheaded this campaign and having been ridiculed constantly for it. The international recognition is an important validation that we are doing the right thing," he said.

The winners were honored in San Francisco yesterday. Each regional winner was awarded a statuette and $125,000.

"This year's winners have looked beyond themselves, often risking freedom or safety, to inspire their communities for environmental

RP ENVIRONMENTALIST/A18

Samaritana haven for Magdalenas

By Blanche S. Rivera

EVERYDAY for seven years, Cita (not her real name) would be up at 2 a.m., her body tired, her heart numb. Different men had occupied the hours of her day and night for different fees, depending on the services they demanded.

Today, Cita maintains her 2 a.m. schedule, but the wee hours are now spent in prayer and communion with only one man: her Father in heaven.

It is her quiet time with the Lord, she says, because she works and attends to her 10-year-old handicapped child the rest of the day. Her prayers and her son have changed her life since she left the sex trade in 1994, she tells the INQUIRER in an interview.

Cita, 35, is one of some 200 female sex workers befriended and assisted by the Samaritana Transformation Ministries, a non-government organization that works to take women in prostitution off the streets and out of the bars into a new life. She is also one of the "trainees" who have come back to volunteer their services and share their experiences to help Samaritana reach out to more women who walk the streets at night.

Samaritana is a 10-year-old NGO that aims to "restore women involved in prostitution to their God-given worth and dignity" by offering them spiritual and economic alternatives.

The challenge of transformation, however, is not just about the lack of money. Sometimes, the past comes barging in, like it did on Cita.

While many in her community are supportive of the changes in

SAMARITANA/A7

JOAN BONDOC

OBJECT of Holy Week devotion is the image of the crucified Jesus, this one at the Sacred Heart Parish in QC.

Bishops bless 'pabasa' in rap, not crucifixion

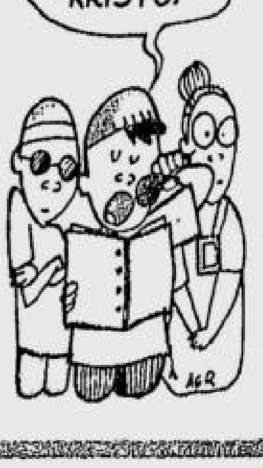
By Armand Nocum

THE CATHOLIC church is singing a new song, and it goes something like this: Rap music is hip.

The Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines yesterday said it could accept the delivery of the traditional "*pabasa*" through rap music, but it continued to draw the line on people nailing themselves to crosses on Good Friday.

CBCP Secretary General Monsignor Her-

BISHOPS/A19


YO,YES-YES YO! MULING NADAPA SI KRISTO!
AGR

Violent Good Friday procession assailed

By Romulo Ponte
PDI S. Luzon Bureau

VICTORIA, Laguna—A solemn event? Violent is more like it.

In this town, it is expected that even before the Good Friday procession is over, the glass coffin of the "Senyor" will be broken, the image will be shorn of its wig and its fingers will be cut.

Past processions in La Resurreccion Parish have provided plenty of violence.

Last year an officer of the Church-based group Couples for Christ tried to move to safety when the barefoot devotees bearing the coffin of the Senyor barreled her way.

In her haste, she fell face down on concrete pavement, and she was

VIOLENT/A7

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: The whole country will experience partly cloudy to at times cloudy skies with isolated rainshowers and thunderstorms..
SOURCE: PAGASA

COMPILED BY: RAY LEYESA, PDI RESEARCH/04/15/03

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Tuguegarao	Party Cloudy	Cebu	Party Cloudy
Laoag	Party Cloudy	Tacloban	Party Cloudy
Clark Zone	Party Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Party Cloudy
Tagaytay	Party Cloudy	Zamboanga	Party Cloudy
Legazpi	Party Cloudy	Cagayan de Oro	Party Cloudy
Calapan	Party Cloudy	Davao	Party Cloudy

Moro rebs press bid to retake camp

COTABATO CITY—Clashes continued in Central Mindanao over the weekend as Moro Islamic Liberation Front rebels stepped up their bid to retake their Buliok complex stronghold which fell to government troops last February.

On Sunday, MILF rebels attacked a village in Pikit, North Cotabato, killing a Muslim clan member and wounding three children, the military said yesterday.

Maj. Julieto Ando, spokesperson of the Army's 6th Infantry Division, said a group of rebels arrived in Barangay Bualan at around 8:30 p.m. on Sunday and started firing at a house owned by the Karim clan.

Ando identified the fatality as Ismael Karim, 19. Wounded were Ismael's siblings identified as Hashim, 15, Nasser, 12, and Norhamin, 5.

The 40th Infantry Battalion is pursuing the suspects, Ando said.

Earlier that day, Ando said MILF guerillas led by Pakil Ayunan, the military's most wanted man in south-central Mindanao, set fire to at least 15 houses in Dalingaoen, a neighboring barangay.

The village's residents fled when the military launched its offensive against the separatist rebels in Pikit in February.

MILF spokesperson Eid Kabalu has denied their forces were involved in the attacks. He said Pakil Ayunan was not an MILF member.

In Pigcawayan, North Cotabato, Ando said military experts had detonated an improvised bomb that rebels were suspected to have planted inside a refreshment parlor in the town's public market.

On Saturday, an unidentified man threw a Molotov bomb at a military outpost near the Quirino Bridge here. No one was hurt in the blast.

Because of the attacks, Ando said peacekeeping forces in Central Mindanao have been placed on maximum alert. He said military and paramilitary forces in the region were under strict instructions to remain in their posts to ensure the security of civilians.

In Maguindanao, the military said troops killed at least a dozen MILF rebels died in heavy fighting in Barira town, near the former Camp Abubakar, late Sunday, the military said.

Maj. Gen. Generoso Senga, commander of the Army's 6th Infantry Division, said about 30 heavily armed MILF rebels attacked an Army outpost in barangay Tugaig at around 6 p.m., triggering a gunfight that lasted two hours.

Senga said three soldiers were wounded in the attack.

In a simultaneous operation, the rebels led by a commander Cordon Sayfulla, attacked the camp of the 74th Infantry Battalion in Sitio Bombaran with rocket-propelled grenades, Senga said.

"They continue to harass our positions, we continue to fire back and hit them," Senga told reporters.

He said the bodies of the slain rebels had been turned over to the next of kin.

Kabalu, the MILF spokesperson, admitted that the rebels had initiated the attacks but denied that the rebels suffered any casualties.

"We suffered fatalities but not that big," he said, claiming that their forces killed at least three soldiers.

Kabalu stressed the MILF would only cease its attacks if a genuine ceasefire were put in place.

"We will always be ready for them," Senga retorted.

Last month, government and MILF negotiators met in Malaysia to explore the possibility of resuming the stalled peace talks.

During the meeting, both panels agreed to avoid acts that would trigger violence.

But government troops were continuing military operations against their forces, Kabalu claimed.

"So what we are doing is reciprocating the act of the military," he said. *Edwin O. Fernandez, Rosa-May V. de Guzman and Charlie C. Senase, PDI Mindanao Bureau, and Martin P. Marfil, Metro Manila*

Sino trader's kidnappers not Abu

By Martin P. Marfil

MILITARY and police officials in Mindanao said yesterday a small-time kidnap group, not the Abu Sayyaf, had kidnapped a Chinese-Filipino trader in Siasi on Sunday even as President Macapagal-Arroyo declared there would be "no-let-up, no negotiations" in military operations against the bandit group believed to have seized businesswoman Gertrudes Tan.

Maj. Gen. Roy Kyamko, the chief of the Southern Command, said there was a possibility that Tan would be turned over by her kidnappers to the Abu Sayyaf.

"That's how they operate. The Abu Sayyaf would then be the ones to negotiate (for ransom)," Kyamko told reporters.

He likened the case to that of the kidnapped Indonesians who were seized by "pirates" and then turned over to the Abu Sayyaf.

The Sulu police, meanwhile, are looking into the "rejected suitor" angle in the kidnapping of the Chinese-Filipino businesswoman.

The Sulu provincial police chief, Arip Baanan, was apparently basing his theory on the fact that Tan, at 50, was still quite attractive and "still looks young."

Baanan said police were probing Tan's acquaintances at the Siasi port where she maintained a small store.

Tan was abducted in front of her home on Siasi's North Boulevard on Sunday while on her way to Mass.

Four men seized her at gunpoint and then dragged her into a fishing boat named the "Mighty Bond."

Sulu businessman Temojen Tulawie discounted ransom as a motive as he said Tan "is not that rich to be kidnapped for ransom."

Lt. Col. Renoir Pascua, the Southern Command spokesperson, said the military was also looking into "the probability that prohibited drugs or business rivalry was the motive."

With a report from Julie S. Alipala, *PDI Mindanao Bureau, and Carlito Pablo*

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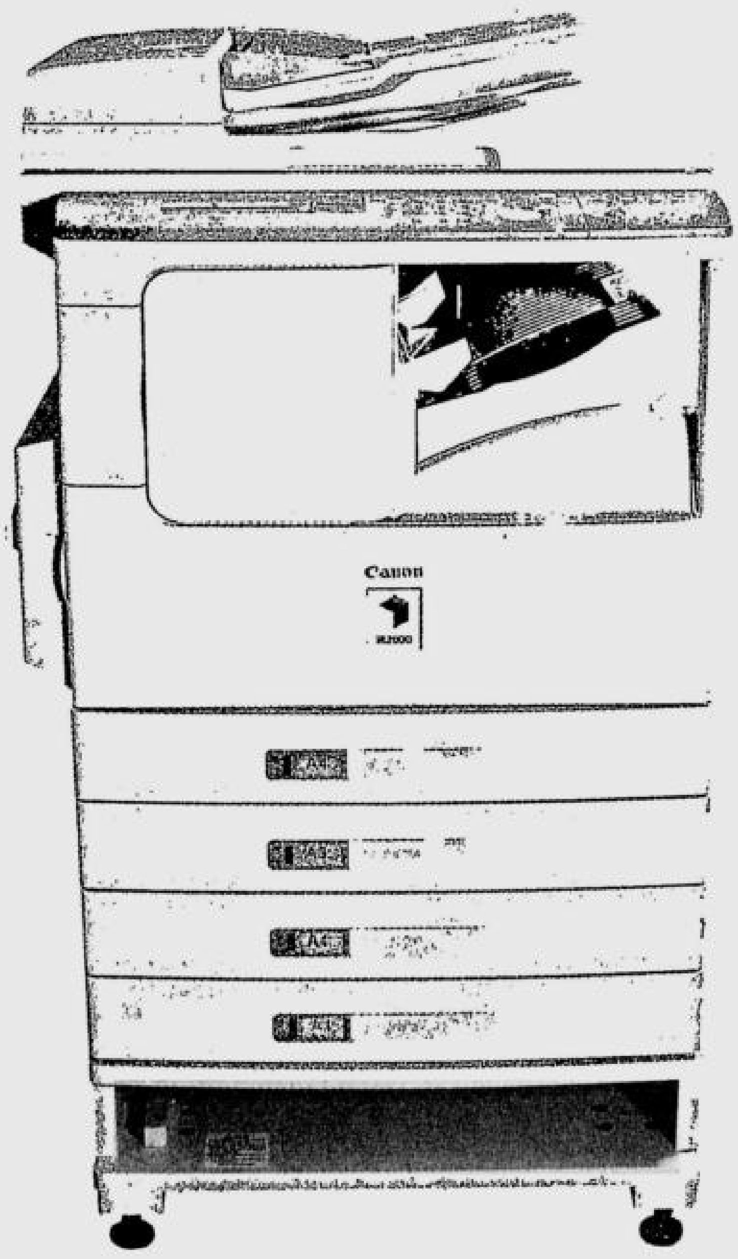

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Freed Indon tells of foreigners among Abus

AN INDONESIAN sailor who escaped from Abu Sayyaf extremists has told the military that the bandit group was being helped by foreign fighters, including two Javanese-speaking men, an official said yesterday.

The claim appears to bolster suspicion by the military that the Abu Sayyaf, notorious for kidnappings and killings, have links to Jemaah Islamiah, a regional Islamic extremist group with ties to the al-Qaida terrorist network of Saudi dissident Osama bin Laden.

Col. Alexander Aleo, the Army commander in Sulu province, said Indonesian Pieter Lerrich had told the military after escaping last week that "there were two Javanese-speaking men who conducted training for the Abu Sayyaf."

Javanese for sure

"He was very sure that the language they used was Javanese because Lerrich is a Javanese," Aleo said.

Aleo said the military has received intelligence reports that foreigners were training Abu Sayyaf extremists. But he said the reports did not indicate their nationalities or how many were involved.

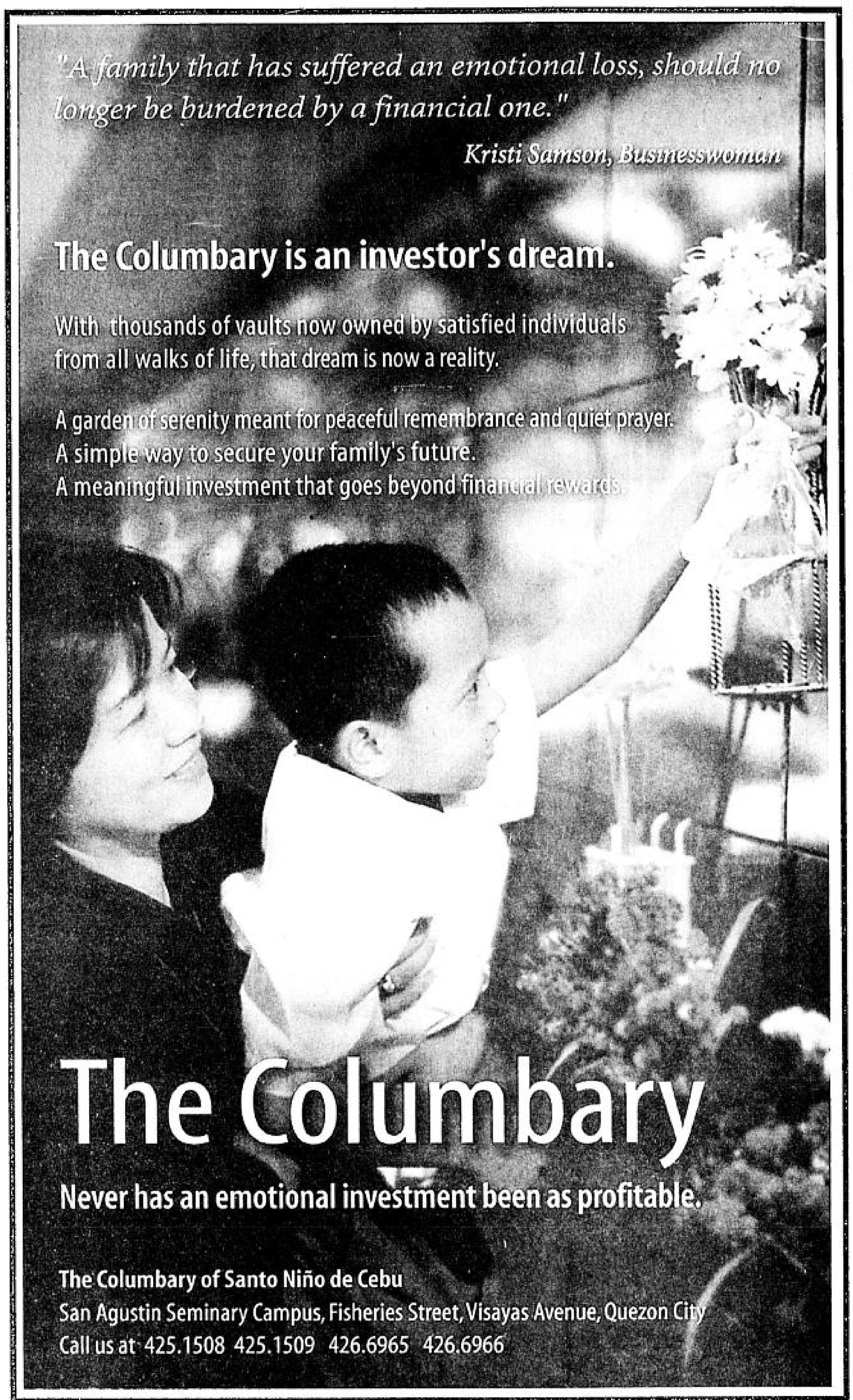
Lerrich is one of four Indonesian tugboat crewmen seized by the Abu Sayyaf last year off Sulu's Jolo island. Two others escaped earlier, and another has reportedly died in captivity.

Lerrich, 37, said he escaped Wednesday night and kept climbing the jungle hills until he reached the town of Maligay, where a local official took him to the military. Maligay is a village in Jolo's Patikul town.

Abu Sayyaf rebels are still holding four women preachers of the Jehovah's Witnesses Christian sect who were kidnapped last year.

A US-backed offensive has been credited with decimating the main Abu Sayyaf faction on nearby Basilan island last year. The group is banned in the United States as a terrorist organization.

US and Filipino defense officials are preparing for joint counterterrorism training exercises later this year in Jolo, aiming to wipe out the remaining forces of the Abu Sayyaf. *AP*



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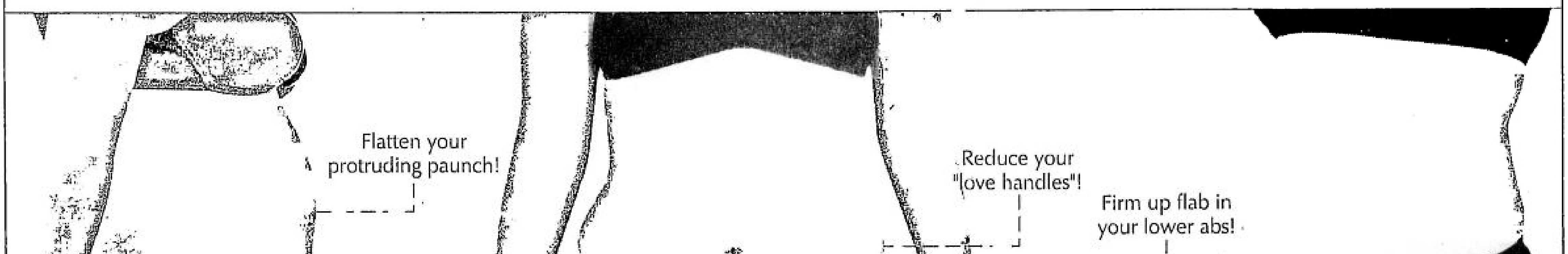
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THE TRUTH ABOUT THE CTPL-COC AUTHENTICATION

BEFORE THE TRUTH BECOMES A HOPELESS CASUALTY OF THE ONGOING DISAGREEMENT REGARDING THE AUTHENTICATION OF THE COMPULSORY THIRD PARTY LIABILITY-CERTIFICATE OF COVER (CTPL-COC) INSURANCE POLICIES BETWEEN THE LAND TRANSPORTATION OFFICE (LTO) AND THE INSURANCE & SURETY ASSOCIATION OF THE PHILIPPINES (ISAP), THE DEVELOPER AND OPERATOR OF THE LTO-INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (LTO-IT) SYSTEM, STRADCOM CORPORATION, NOW BREAKS ITS SILENCE TO CONFRONT CERTAIN QUESTIONS RAISED BY ISAP IN A RECENT SERIES OF ADVERTISEMENTS.

THE PROBLEM OF FAKE CTPL-COCs

Anyone who owns or drives a car or other motor vehicle knows that before your yearly registration with LTO, you need to get a CTPL-COC. The problem is, as the Insurance and Surety Association of the Philippines (ISAP) itself admits, **3 out of 4 CTPL-COCs are either fake or unauthorized.**

The proposed solution by the LTO and the Insurance Commission (IC) under their Joint Memorandum Circular dated March 14, 2002, is the establishment of a **fully automated** -- no unsupervised nor unofficial human intervention -- system of registration and verification of the CTPL-COC with the existing workflow of the LTO, validated **online and in realtime** basis (or the authentication system).

ISAP, and not each member-insurance company, contracted SQL *Wizard and D:Tech separately, to develop an authentication and verification system which is presently being implemented but which LTO calls a **"dismal failure." WHY?**

1. ISAP's authentication system is **not fully automated and requires manual or human intervention**; an issued CTPL-COC is only authenticated **by manually putting a sticker on it.**

2. ISAP's authentication system is only **partially being implemented** and is in fact **not integrated with the existing workflow of the LTO**, more specifically with the LTO-IT Project. While ISAP claims an improvement in the number of authenticated CTPL-COCs issued for the last 9 months (July 2002 March 2003) of **1,698,700**, perhaps in reference to **2,851,782** motor vehicles that were registered in the same period, it neglected to mention that **1,153,082 CTPL COCs were not authenticated.**

STRADCOM'S ANSWERS TO ISAP'S QUERIES

1. ISAP has no exclusivity on the authentication system nor does it have any regulatory power to require Stradcom to seek its approval for the development of a **system that is truly compliant with the IC and LTO Joint Memorandum Circular**. And while it is true that Stradcom did bid for the ISAP authentication system, **ISAP has refused to clearly explain how a P5.00 bid won over Stradcom's P2.00 bid. Despite Stradcom's protest, ISAP awarded the project to the higher bidder**. Notably, there are now breakaways from the ISAP membership because of the authentication system issue.

2. The LTO-IT Project was undertaken and completed by Stradcom after competitive public bidding. It is a BOT project undertaken through a build-own-operate (BOO) scheme, and includes automation of the motor vehicle registration system (MVRS) of the LTO. **Under its BOO Agreement, Stradcom has the exclusive right to provide information technology (IT) services to DOTC/LTO.**

   Stradcom continues to enhance the MVRS based on LTO's requirements, which in this instance, refers to the CTPL-COC authentication system.

3. As shown, LTO has given D:Tech and SQL *Wizard as well as ISAP several chances but the ISAP Authentication System is still a "dismal failure." Perhaps, ISAP should explain why it continues to refuse the Stradcom system despite persistent suggestions from the LTO and favorable endorsements from ISAP members who have tested it.

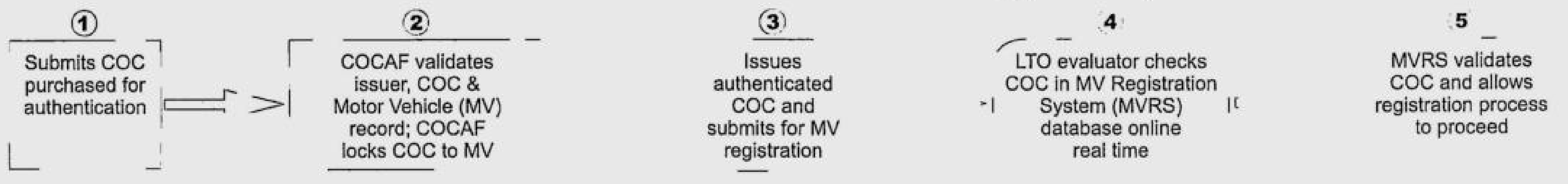
   Is ISAP not intent on helping the Insurance Commission (IC) and the LTO in their effort to combat the issuance of fake and spurious COCs that (a) defraud the government of the taxes and the issuing insurance companies of the premiums legally due and (b) victimizes the innocent motor vehicle owners who are robbed of the insurance protection they pay for?

4. The Stradcom's authentication system uses a **three-way match when authenticating a COC** that is, it identifies the **insurance company or issuing agency that sells the COC,** ensures the **uniqueness of the COC,** and **locks the COC information to a motor vehicle record.** This process ensures that the **COC is assigned only to one motor vehicle.** It is also fully integrated with the Motor Vehicle Registration System (MVRS) of the LTO-IT Project. In this manner, all COCs authenticated using the Stradcom COC Authentication Facility (COCAF) are validated **online, in real time** basis, upon registration of the motor vehicle in **any automated LTO office nationwide**, without adding another work step to the existing workflow of the LTO. Moreover, the Stradcom COCAF passed all tests required by the LTO based on LTO's approved Business Process Specifications.

   After the LTO found the ISAP system unacceptable, it repeatedly invited ISAP and its member-companies to a 2-week trial of the Stradcom COCAF. ISAP repeatedly turned down the invitation. Some ISAP members, particularly the reputable insurance companies that tested the Stradcom COCAF, endorsed it because of the integrated and seamless end-to-end solution that it offers. **At present, almost all the members of the Philippine General Insurers Association, Inc. (PGIA), comprising substantial volume of the insurance industry, have already interconnected with the Stradcom COCAF and are continuously testing it with very satisfactory result.**

COMPARISON BETWEEN STRADCOM AND ISAP/SQL/D:TECH SYSTEMS

STRADCOM COC Authentication Facility (COCAF)



① Submits COC purchased for authentication

② COCAF validates issuer, COC & Motor Vehicle (MV) record; COCAF locks COC to MV

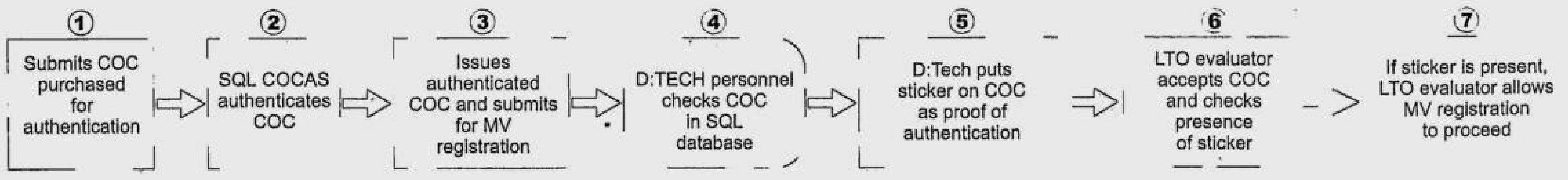
③ Issues authenticated COC and submits for MV registration

4 LTO evaluator checks COC in MV Registration System (MVRS) database online real time

5 MVRS validates COC and allows registration process to proceed

STRADCOM COCAF is fully automated and ensures only one COC for each vehicle registered thus eliminating fake/recycled COCs.

ISAP/SQL/D:Tech COC Authentication (COCAS)



① Submits COC purchased for authentication

② SQL COCAS authenticates COC

③ Issues authenticated COC and submits for MV registration

④ D:TECH personnel checks COC in SQL database

⑤ D:Tech puts sticker on COC as proof of authentication

6 LTO evaluator accepts COC and checks presence of sticker

⑦ If sticker is present, LTO evaluator allows MV registration to proceed

ISAP COCAS is not fully automated and requires human intervention thus vulnerable to issuance of fake/recycled COCs.

UNTIL THE AUTHENTICATION OF THE COCs IS FINALLY INTEGRATED WITH THE LTO-IT SYSTEM, THE IC AND LTO MAY NOT BE ABLE TO STOP THE PROLIFERATION OF FAKE AND RECYCLED CTPL-COCs AND THE RESULTANT LOSS OF REVENUES FOR THE GOVERNMENT AND THE LEGITIMATE INSURANCE COMPANIES AND PROTECTION FOR MOTOR VEHICLE

Advt.

ERC gets 1st proposal for P28-B Meralco refund

By Gerald G. Lacuarta

THE ENERGY Regulatory Commission yesterday received the first proposal on how to implement the Supreme Court's recent final decision ordering the Manila Electric Co. to refund its customers around P28 billion in excess charges since 1994.

The Freedom from Debt Coalition, a nongovernment think tank, proposed that Meralco convert the P28 billion into shares of ownership, which would give the power firm's 3.8 million consumers majority control of the utility that is currently controlled by the Lopez family.

A two-page position paper the FDC submitted to the ERC projected that the converted shares would give consumers a 74-percent stake in Meralco with 2.8 billion shares, compared to the Lopezes' 4.4 percent stake. It would also dilute the government's 25.5 percent stake in the utility to 6.6 percent.

Other consumer groups have demanded either an outright or staggered cash refund from Meralco, but they have not submitted their proposals to the ERC, the government body that regulates the power industry.

The FDC had been airing its conversion proposal since November last year when the Supreme Court's Third Division issued the first order to refund.

Yesterday, FDC officials led by president Ana Marie Nemenzo formally presented their idea to the ERC, after the SC had ruled with finality on April 10 that Meralco could not charge income tax payments to operating expenses and should thus refund the amount of P0.167 per kilowatt-hour it had been overcharging consumers since 1994.

"They were open to the proposal. It was the first they had formally received and they said they were going to study it," Nemenzo told the INQUIRER at a picket outside the ERC office in Mandaluyong, after a 45-minute meeting with ERC chair Leticia Ibay and two commissioners.

In proposing the conversion of the P28 billion into consumer shares of ownership, the FDC said Meralco is not in a financial position to award a full refund.

Estafa raps eyed against Meralco

By Ronnel W. Domingo

BAYAN Muna Rep. Crispin Beltran said yesterday his group is considering filing charges of estafa against the Manila Electric Co.—and possibly the Macapagal administration—if it continues to refuse to refund some P28 billion in overcharges to consumers.

In a statement, Beltran rejected Meralco's argument that it could not pay the refund because it had spent the money.

"Meralco has no right to spend its funds in whatever way it wants, especially since it is not completely a private corporation and is in fact a government-owned (one)," the lawmaker said.

Beltran had previously called on the government to take over management of the utility, based on its share-holdings.

The government, through its various agencies, has a 25-percent stake in Meralco—the biggest single ownership block—but it does not control its management.

Beltran said the P28 billion in overcharges, which the Supreme Court ordered Meralco to return to its customers, should not have been touched.

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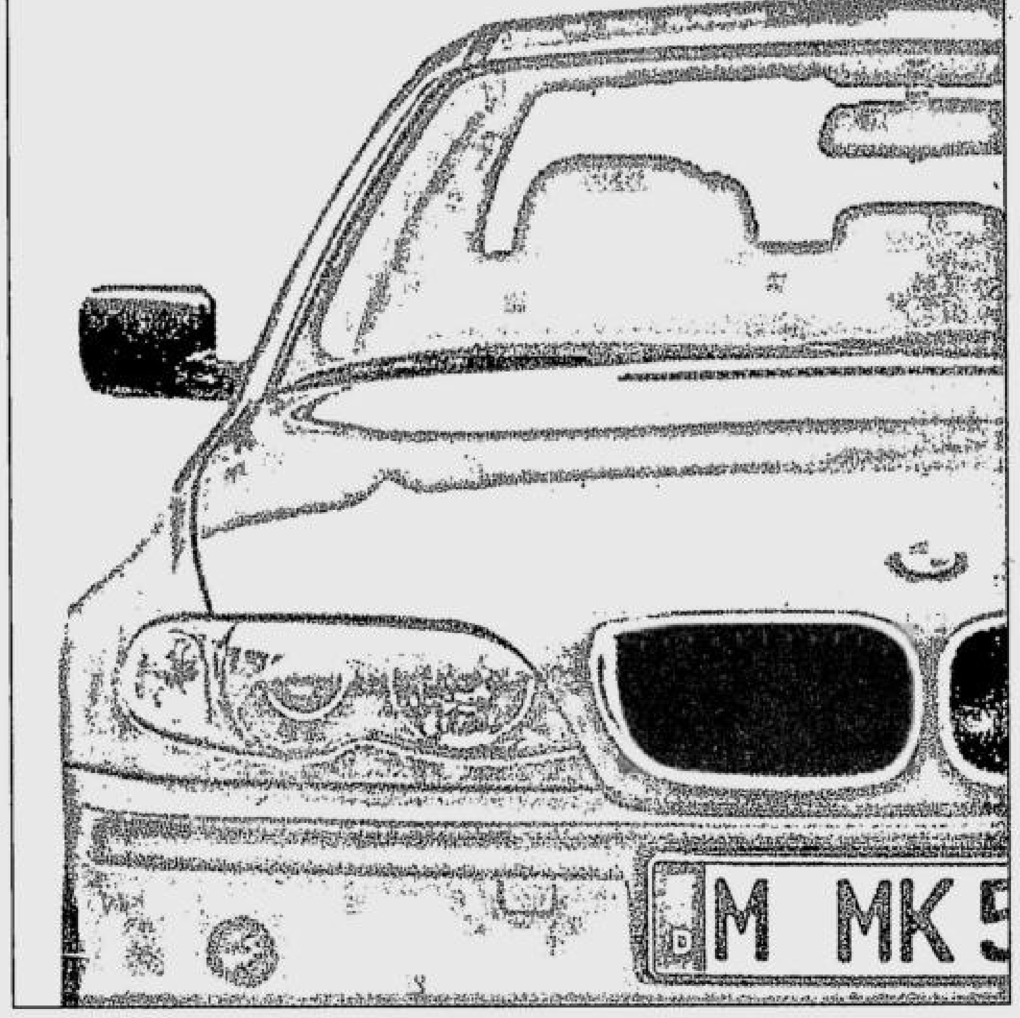

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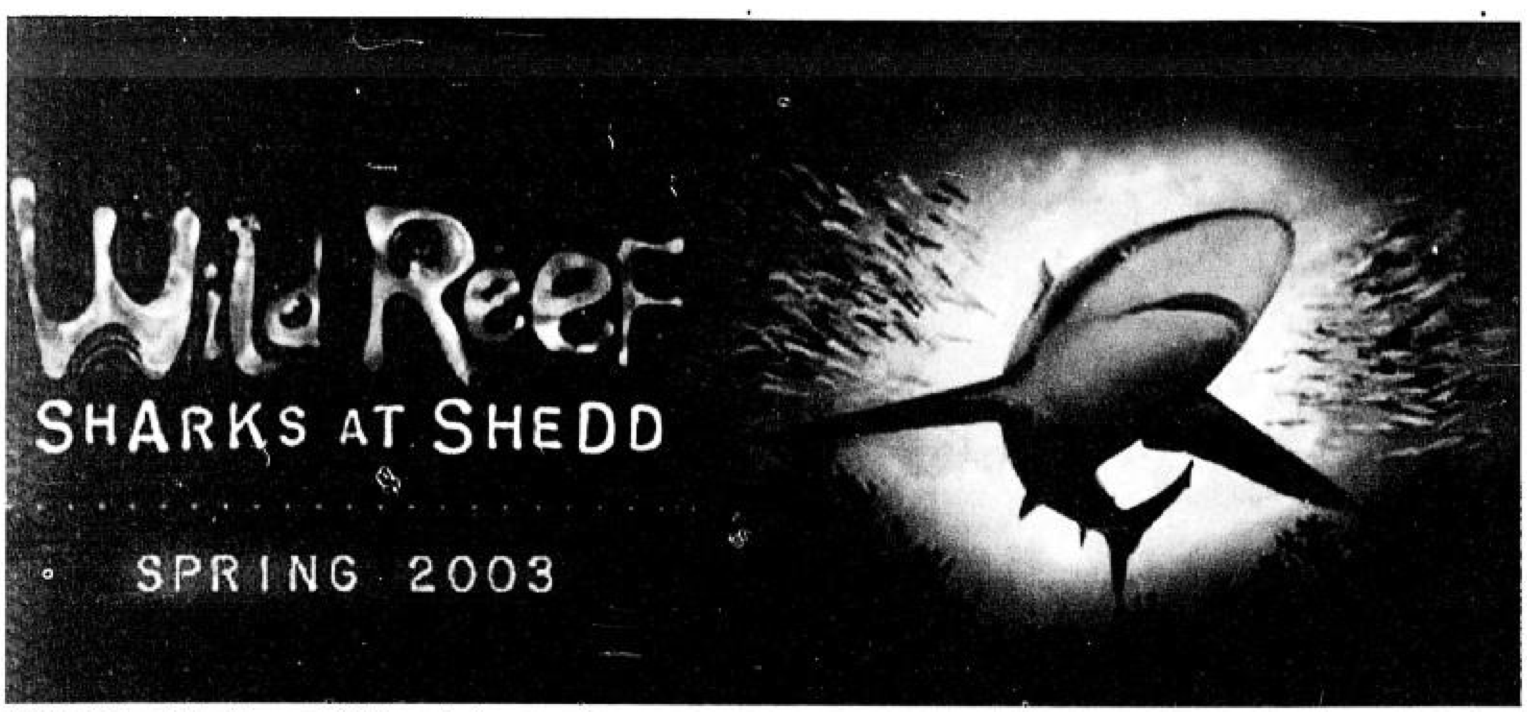
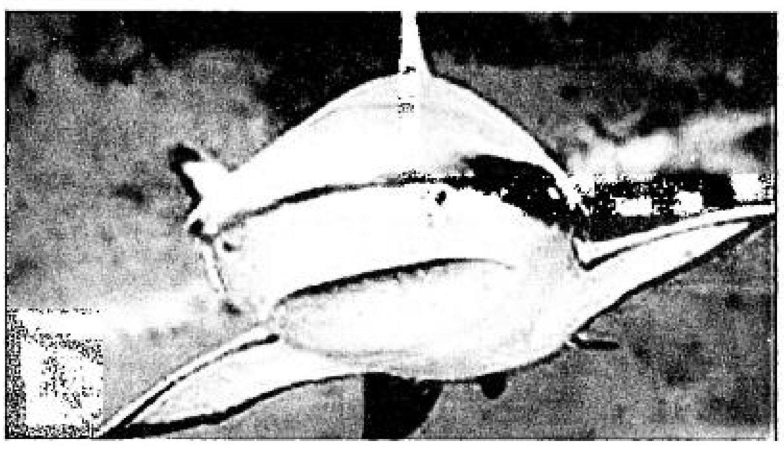


WILD REEF exhibit of the world's biggest indoor aquarium

WORLD'S BIGGEST

Negros island coral reef is star of Chicago's Shedd aquarium

By Ted Regencia
Contributor



SHARK ATTACK: One of the many sharks—all natives of the Philippine reef area—making up the Shedd exhibit

CHICAGO, Illinois—After eight long years of planning, research and construction, the largest indoor aquarium on earth solidifies its status with the official opening today of a new gigantic wing featuring Philippine marine treasures from Apo Island in Negros Oriental.

Shedd Aquarium welcomes the world to Wild Reef, a $47-million underwater exhibit teeming with sharks, corals, eels, rays, even lobsters. It is a recreation of Apo Island's coral reef, a favorite dive site of enthusiasts from across the seven seas. Around 18 tons of sand were transported from the Philippines to create a realistic seabed and natural habitat for the extraordinary "guests."

Philippine Consul General to Chicago Emelinda Pineda hailed the permanent display as a source of great pride not only to the 180,000 or so Filipino-Americans in Chicago, but to all Filipinos.

"We are elated and thankful to Shedd for bringing a piece of the Philippines to Chicago," Pineda said. "We hope that through the exhibit, the aquarium's millions of visitors will appreciate the Philippines as the epicenter of ocean diversity and that, with all its unique attractions, the country is a worthy tourist destination."

Apo Reef

Apo Reef is home to 450 coral species and 2,500 fish species. Australia's Great Barrier Reef has only 350 coral species and 1,500 fish species; and off Hawaii's coast, there are only 50 coral species and 460 fish species.

Shedd President and CEO Ted Beattie thus declared the opening of Wild Reef as "Chicago history in the making," and one of the most exciting things to happen at the already famous facility.

The aquarium—already 395,000 sq. ft before the construction of the new wing—is located in Chicago's G Park Museum Complex at Lake Shore Drive, Roosevelt Road. The complex also includes the Field Museum of Natural History and Max Adler Planetarium.

Part of Shedd's master plan to bring the world's six aquatic ecosystems under one roof, the new wing represents the Indo-Pacific coral reef ecosystem—a designation that Apo can claim solely as its own.

Sharks and corals

Wild Reef's main attractions are the 30 to 35 sharks—Japanese wobbegongs, zebras, blacktip reef and whitetip reef varieties. Visitors descend 25 feet from ground level for a diver's eye view of the predators showing off their moves inside a 750,000-gallon tank.

"Sharks are the most efficient killers in the ocean," said Bert Vescolani, VP for aquarium collections and education. However, he noted, widespread ignorance of their nature had led to sharks' "unabated slaughter." With the exhibit, Vescolani said, Shedd hoped to highlight the need to protect the "misunderstood" creatures.

As the sights, so the sounds: a recording of sea "symphonies"—gently lapping waves, rolling surf, screeching seagulls—constantly plays in the background, the better to capture Apo's ambience. Also part of the exhibit is a replica of the Philippine island community, meant to underscore the people's crucial role in the area's rehabilitation and protection.

Dazzling corals

Dazzling corals share top billing with the sharks. Although the exhibit is closely patterned after the featured Philippine site, much of the displayed clusters come from Shedd's own coral propagation program. Each year, these corals are set down in a "competitive reef ecosystem" where they are expected to thrive. As an added incentive, visitors can learn more about corals in an "interactive" underwater cave.

Assigned "supporting roles" in the spectacular show are 500 species of fish numbering up to a million—barracudas, jacks, clownfish, jawfish, stingrays among them—making Shedd a unique experience, if only second best to the real thing.

Beyond the drama and the commercial value of Wild Reef, Shedd hopes to bring about positive change, as much through conservation as through education.

The exhibit calls attention to harmful practices, like blast fishing and other activities that destroy coral reefs. Shedd officials stressed that raising awareness of the need to sustain these ecosystems was "a critical mission" of the project.

Since the Chicago Aquarium opened 73 years ago, the mission has always been apparent in its ventures. According to Shedd officials, the Wild Reef exhibit amplifies this thrust by showcasing "the circle of life" under the sea and upholding a concrete example of a concerted effort to preserve it.

Apo Island is a 72-hectare volcanic "rock" located just south of Dumaguete City, capital of Negros Oriental.

In 1978 the island community of mostly fishermen started a coral reef restoration program with the help of world-renowned marine biologists from Silliman University. The scientists, headed by Stanford University-educated Dr. Angel Alcala, convinced the islanders to adopt new fishing techniques.

They initially resisted the idea, but eventually the islanders embraced it, even organizing themselves to police Apo's vicinity and protect it from outsiders.

Marine reserve

Two years later, a set of conservation guidelines was endorsed by the Apo barangay council and the town of Dauin, which had political jurisdiction over the island. In 1985, the island was formally declared a marine reserve and today it is a model marine sanctuary.

Its success has not gone unnoticed. Professional and amateur divers from around the world rave about Apo Reef. The islanders themselves have been rewarded with bigger catch than ever in the same old fishing grounds.

For outstanding environmental achievements, foremost of which was his role in the sustainable development of Apo Island, Dr. Alcala received the 1992 Ramon Magsaysay Award and Chicago Field Museum's 1994 Founders' Council Award. Then in December 1997, the whole Apo community shared the honors for "Best Managed Reef," given by the Philippine Council for Aquatic and Marine Research.

Meanwhile, Shedd Aquarium experts had taken notice of the exemplary conservation program. After intense discussions with the Silliman scientists and numerous research trips to the site, the experts decided they had found the perfect model for the ambitious and pivotal Wild Reef project.

Iraqi envoys to RP still accredited . . .

By Norman Bordadora

THE PHILIPPINES has not severed diplomatic relations with the government of deposed Iraqi President Saddam Hussein and his diplomats in the country continue to enjoy diplomatic privileges and immunity.

Foreign Affairs Secretary Blas Ople made the statement in the wake of an INQUIRER report that said the government had revoked the diplomatic privileges of the Iraqi envoys in the country following the collapse of the Saddam regime in Iraq.

"The lines of communication to and from the Iraqi Embassy have never been closed," Ople said.

He said the Department of Foreign Affairs still maintains contact with charge d'affaires Samir Bolus and the other Iraqi envoys in the country.

The Iraqi ambassador to the Philippines, Dr. Ghazi Fayssal Hussein, a recent appointee, has not been able to present his credentials to the President, and appears to have been overtaken by the events in his country.

"We have not ceased to recognize the diplomatic character of the Iraqi Embassy or its officials. They continue to enjoy the privileges and immunities accorded to them under the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations," said Ople, "until we receive contrary information from their new government."

"We have not severed diplomatic ties with Iraq," he added.

Ople also denied issuing any instructions to DFA officials to "cease all contacts" with the Iraqi envoys.

"That would make us look . . . uninformed," he said.

Ople, in a news conference last week, had said that Ambassador Hussein, charge d'affaires Bolus and two other Iraqi diplomats would "fall into some kind of limbo," after the fall of Saddam.

He said the DFA continued to be in touch with the Iraqi diplomats at their embassy in Dasmariñas Village, Makati, but admitted that Saddam's fall made dealing with them rather "awkward."

"One way of putting it is we are still waiting for a new legitimate government in Iraq. Once that is established, we will probably recognize it and the effect will be to disenfranchise the present crop of Iraqi officials in Manila," he said.

. . . But Drilon says they're in limbo

By Cynthia D. Balana

SENATE President Franklin Drilon yesterday said that Iraqi diplomats in Manila are in "limbo" until a new government in Baghdad is installed by the coalition forces that invaded Iraq.

Speaking in a press conference, Drilon said that while it was unnecessary to revoke the accreditation of the diplomats here, such a move would would not be practical at this time.

"But they are in limbo. We can't appoint an envoy at this time in Iraq because there's no government in Iraq," Drilon explained.

"He said that the first step would be for the government to recognize whatever government will be installed in Iraq because the recognition can't take place at this time," he said.

Iraqi diplomats, Drilon said, can continue to represent their government until a new one is installed.

In the case of the bank accounts of the Iraqi government, Drilon said banks here can freeze them to preserve the money for the next government, but not the personal accounts of members of the Iraqi diplomatic staff.

"The personal accounts of diplomats here can't be touched," he said.

Article 39 of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations provides that every person entitled to privileges and immunities shall enjoy them the moment he enters the territory of the receiving state on proceeding to take up his post or, if already in its territory, from the moments when his appointment is notified to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or such other ministry as may be agreed.

It said that when the functions of a person enjoying privileges and immunities have come to end, such privileges and immunities shall normally cease at the moment when he leaves the country, or on expiry of a reasonable period in which to do so, but shall subsist until that time, even in the case of armed conflict.

However, with respect to acts performed by such person in the exercise of his functions as a member of the mission, immunity shall also subsist.

Senate President Pro Tempore Juan Flavier said it would be a "legitimate precaution" for the Philippines to just wait even for the interim government of Iraq instead of expelling its diplomats here.

"It's just a precaution for practical purposes because the Saddam government has fallen. In other words, there's no more legitimacy here when it comes to their representation," Flavier said.

He said the diplomats can also seek political asylum here, especially if they fear persecution on the part of the new government when they return to Iraq.

PROTEST SCENE

Crucifixion is season's most popular gimmick

By Blanche S. Rivera

WITH THE onset of Holy Week, the Crucifixion of Jesus Christ has become the most popular gimmick of militant groups to highlight the oppression of certain groups in the country by others.

Yesterday, some militant groups staged the Crucifixion at the Department of Labor and Employment, to symbolize the "Calvary" of workers.

The Manggagawa Para sa Kalayaan ng Bayan (Makabayan) lambasted government labor officials for burdening workers with the evils of contractualization, globalization, wage regionalization and amendments to the Labor Code.

"This Holy Week, our officials would again be going to confession, asking forgiveness for their sins, but they never change. Their policies remain a burden to workers," said Francisco Vytingco, external affairs officer of the Manggagawa sa Komunikasyon sa Pilipinas.

The MKP, the rank-and-file union of the Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. joined the crucifixion rites. PLDT workers had gone on strike to protest the retrenchment of 500 of its workers last year. This year, the phone firm's management aims to cut 1,500 jobs in the company.

Makabayan president Pete Pinlac cited the "valuable lesson" left by Jesus Christ to the workers, saying Jesus had fought for the poor.

"Like Jesus, we too shall fight for our rights even if we are considered terrorists by President Macapagal-Arroyo," Pinlac said.

On Sunday, militant groups in the Southern Tagalog region staged a "Kalbaryo ng Bayan" (Nation's Calvary) in Lucena City to protest human rights violations under the Macapagal administration.

PRESENT ARMS
President Macapagal-Arroyo greets the honor guard with a smile as she troops the line during the graduation rites of the Philippine National Police Academy at the Camp General Castañeda in Silang, Cavite. The future policemen and women are members of the Sambigkis Class 2003.
EDWIN BACASMAS

Samaritana haven for Magdalenas

From page A1

her life, some men continue to treat her as a former prostitute. She chooses to ignore them, she says, but sometimes the shame and pain come back.

"That's why I have to pray a lot. I bring them all to God. Sometimes I just don't talk anymore, I just cry and write," says Cita, who seems to have the heart for writing.

Cita is a writer for Hiyas, a newsletter written in Filipino by and about the changed Samaritana women. She helps distribute these to her friends in bars and to those who had known and left Samaritana.

The newsletter contains updates on the trainees: who was going off to college, who successfully put up a store or hair salon, who learned reflexology, food processing or dressmaking. It also includes prayer requests, poems and poignant stories of change.

Samaritana started as a loose group of five women friends, some from UP Navigators, a Christian organization, who made twice-a-month evening trips to the red light district of Manila to meet women and help those who wanted to leave the trade and return to their provinces.

Seeds of hope, change

The group led by Thelma Galvez-Nambu, one of Samaritana's founders, established their first contacts in a squatter community where many women worked in bars. There, in the hearts of barely surviving women, the group planted its first seeds of change—and hope.

These days, Samaritana volunteers and workers venture twice a week to seek out women working in bars or in the streets of Quezon City. Sometimes, to attract attention, the group sets up a women's desk that offers free medical services like blood pressure check up and referrals to clinics.

"It's an entry point," says Samaritana outreach coordinator Tina Dedace. "They come to you because they need it, and soon, they'll be telling you their stories."

'Why are they so nice?'

Shirley, a former guest relations officer, was 24 when she met volunteers from Samaritana. Then working for a known restaurant-bar in Quezon City, Shirley was intrigued by the niceness of the people who bought barbecue from her everyday and invited her to their parties.

"I was thinking: Why are they so nice? What can they possibly want from me?" Shirley recalls. After eight years in the sex trade and many failed relationships, she had stopped believing in the goodness of people.

A high-schooler from Masbate, Shirley slowly, unwittingly entered prostitution at 16. Tall and fair, her employers in restaurants would assign her to serve male customers. By the time she was 24, Shirley was pregnant with her third child by the third man who promised her love but later left her.

Hopeless and desperate, Shirley remembered the people from Samaritana, who had told her two years earlier that she was welcome to come to them anytime she had a problem. She came—and never left again.

"It was very, very difficult to change my life. It took years before my dignity was restored and my heart healed of the anger I had for men," she says.

"But I have come to the Lord, and now I feel I am truly alive," she says. Shirley is now happily married to a faithful man and serves as outreach assistant of Samaritana.

Transitional program

Samaritana offers a life transitional program, a holistic course on alternative livelihood, Christian living, health awareness, community involvement, intellectual advancement, leadership training and empowerment for women leaving prostitution.

Leaving the sex trade is a requirement for those who enter the training, Dedace says. The women are encouraged to explore their interests and skills, which they develop in various livelihood training seminars.

Samaritana women are now into batik-making and the production of cards, gift tags and bookmarks from recycled paper and abaca, some of which are distributed to Christian bookstores.

The products are very good, but the group is having difficulty with the market due to its limited contacts. This limits the income of the women, many of whom have families to support, and poses a challenge to their determination to change.

Dedace says that for economic reasons, some women go back to prostitution during the training. Some of them had been used to earning around P500 a night, while they earn only around P500 a week from the livelihood enterprise while undergoing training. Samaritana does not employ women but offers them opportunities for training and growth towards wholeness and skills for self-efficiency.

"I think God changed our lives and is bringing us back where he got us because there are so many more women to reach out there," Shirley says.

Shirley and Cita conduct home visitations of women friends working in bars in Cubao and Quezon Avenue. Both are praying and waiting for the night their women friends would be safe at home, like themselves.

THE FAMILIAR Moriones mask is worn by penitents in Marinduque for a week in observance of Holy Week. REUTERS

Violent Good Friday procession assailed

From page A1

left with her nose and other parts of her face bleeding.

She complained to the parish priest right after the incident and asked him to do something about "these fanatics who turn a supposedly solemn Good Friday procession into irreligious chaos."

A group of nuns taking part in the procession for the first time had a similar unfortunate experience.

While the procession was in progress, the devotees assigned to carry the Senyor's coffin abruptly ran in the direction of the sisters, causing them to panic and scramble toward a nearby house to seek shelter.

"Is this the way you do your procession here?" a nun asked the parish priest in utter disbelief.

The other year, a devotee tried to get at the image of the Senyor inside the coffin to wipe it with a piece of cloth, hoping to turn the cloth into a "magic charm.". But another devotee attempted to stop him, and they came to blows.

Another Good Friday threatened to become an occasion for violence when a devotee drew a bladed weapon against a procession organizer who was preventing him and his fellow devotees from transporting the coffin beyond the designated route.

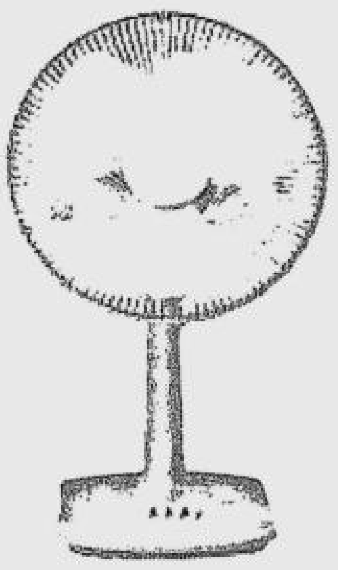
Fortunately, policemen stationed in the vicinity apprehended the man and confiscated the weapon.

Asked to explain the phenomenon of Good Friday devotees turning rough and violent, a former parish priest noted that their behavior was often caused by their narrow and limited grasp of spirituality.

He pleaded for understanding for the devotees who, he said, "are there to fulfill a very deep and meaningful religious promise or commitment."

The priest admitted that the devotees were lacking in adequate evangelization, in terms of the proper way to express their faith and devotion to the crucified Christ.

Sr. Blandina Perez, DVMI, superior of the community here, admitted that evangelization could not be done overnight but rather through a slow process, beginning with the young.



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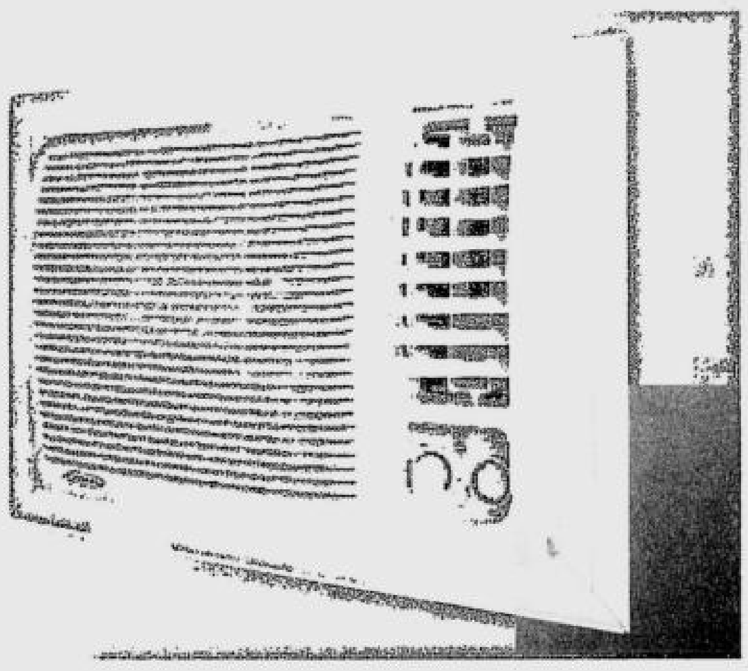

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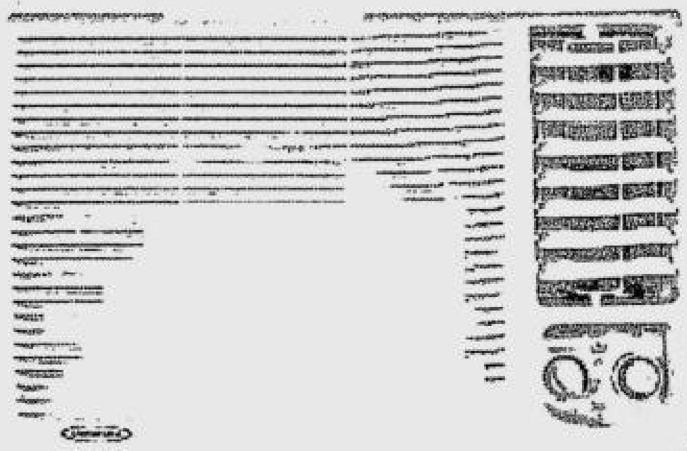

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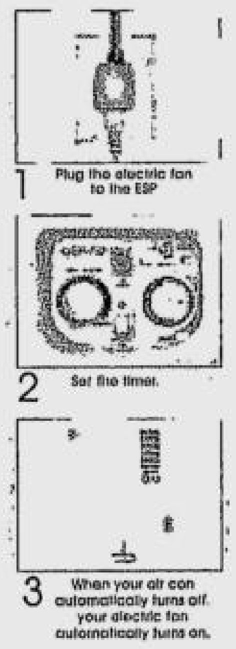

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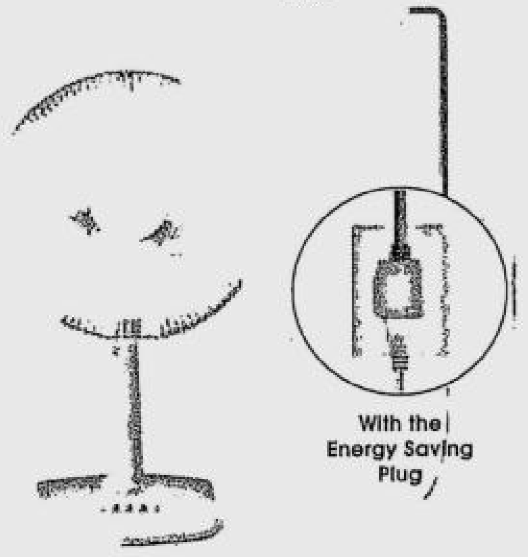

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OPINION

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Bigger and bigger

EDITORIAL

ALL but unnoticed in the shouting, as Baghdad fell to the invaders and its ancient riches were trashed, was the reported announcement by the Armed Forces of the Philippines' new chief of staff that Balikatan 03-1 would after all be held in Sulu. According to Gen. Narciso Abaya, a modified version of the purported joint military exercise between the Philippines and the United States, the same one that roused the seeming sleeping dogs of deep resentment among Sulu residents, would be held in May or June on a scale "bigger" than last year's Balikatan in Basilan. Bigger, because it would supposedly involve all Philippine troops now stationed in Western Mindanao. (Bigger also, because it appears to be the beginning of a war without borders.)

In fact, as Abaya confirms it, components of Balikatan 03-1 are ongoing in Luzon and in the Visayas even as Philippine and US officials are still discussing the fine details of the enterprise. And Sulu Gov. Yusop Jikiri, who, if memory serves, once complained about not being consulted early on, has been reduced to a no-comment stance in the face of an apparent *fait accompli*. But he says the government should conduct an information campaign in Sulu on the matter. (As though he were not part of the government.)

It wasn't too long ago that a full-blown controversy erupted over the plan for Sulu—a simmering issue from which, as it turned out, America's war drums against Iraq stole the thunder. Authorities shelved the planned "war games" there, tentatively set in March, after a loud outcry by Jolo residents pained by the memory of the brutal US pacification campaign there at the turn of the century was coupled with reports in the American media that US crack troops would join Philippine soldiers in operations "to disrupt and defeat the Abu Sayyaf." The way the New York Times, Washington Post, CNN and wire agencies reported it in February, quoting an unnamed Pentagon official, about 350 US special operations forces, mostly Green Berets, would be involved, backed by about 400 more US soldiers based in Zamboanga and about 1,000 Marines aboard US battleships off the coast of Sulu.

The way it looked, the US boys were good to go. (Although at least one US newspaper questioned the wisdom of putting young Americans directly in harm's way in Sulu.) But Malacañang's comment on the startling reports—startling because they not only showed clear intent to violate the Philippine Constitution but also indicated the extent and nature of official doublespeak—was that the American media had been taken for a ride (*"nakuryente"* was how Ignacio Bunye, spokesperson for President Macapagal-Arroyo, cavalierly put it). And yet one Pentagon official, as quoted by CNN, could not have been more succinct: "This will be a no-holds-barred effort. This is not an exercise."

The situation was such that Defense Secretary Angelo Reyes had to fly to the United States to confer with his American counterpart. Before the Sulu war games landed on the shelf—and momentarily faded from public attention—Donald Rumsfeld made appropriate noises to the effect that US troops would engage in the military exercise under terms in keeping with the Philippine Constitution.

After which, in Manila, Malacañang announced that a number of other provinces had indicated interest in hosting Balikatan 03-1 if Sulu did not want it, and that the President was inclined to consider their applications.

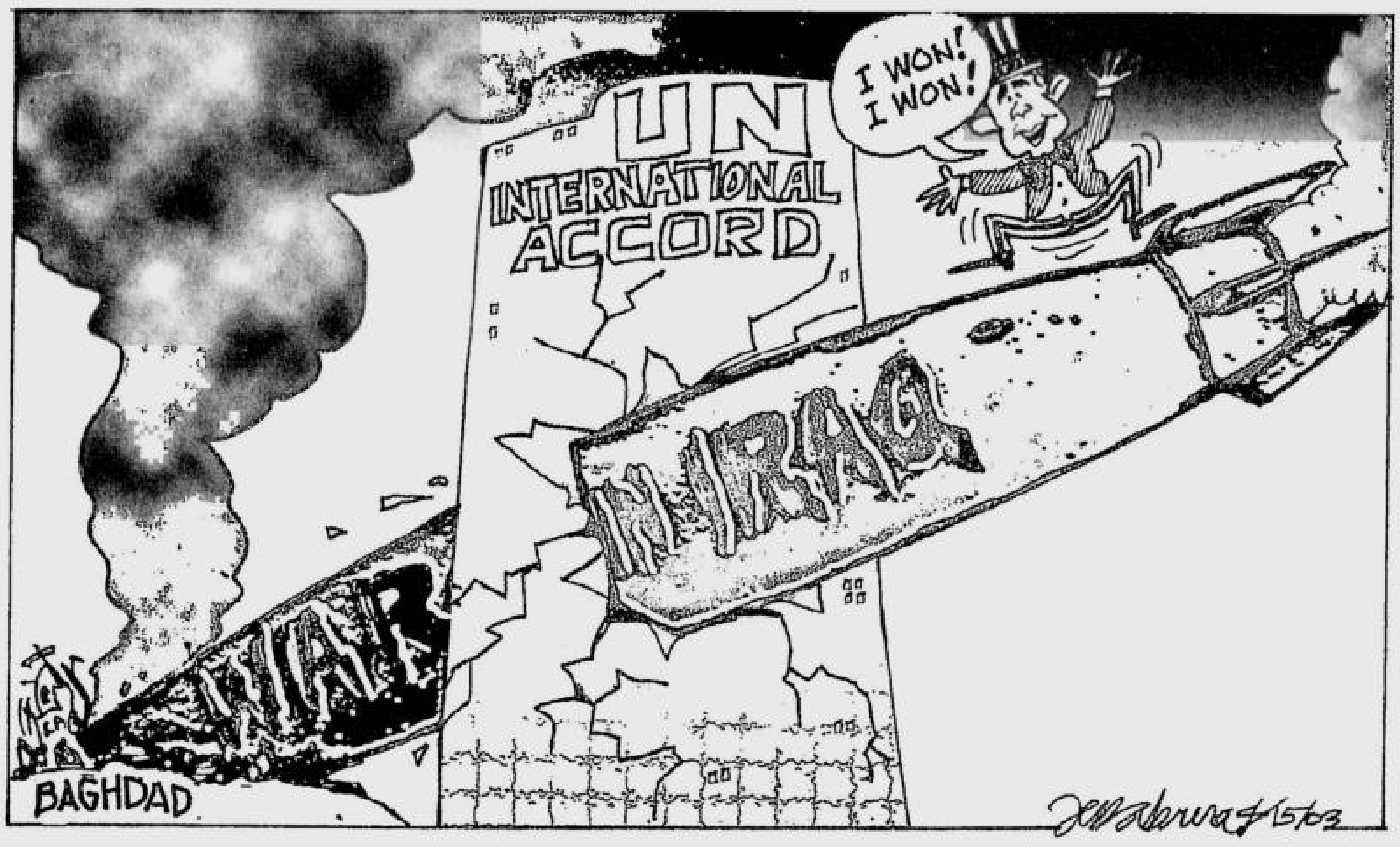
But Sulu it is.

Authorities like to trot out the dollar signs when they announce the supposed virtues of the Balikatan. Secretary Reyes trumpets that 03-1 would have a higher budget than 02-1; Brig. Gen. Emmanuel Teodosio has let drop the figure of $100 million—and supposedly for only the first 45 days of the 6-month exercise.

The way they sound, money is the only reason why the government is agreeing to host what threatens to be the next battleground in the US "war on terrorism" (the same war President Macapagal-Arroyo so ardently wages).

Attentive observers would agree that with the invasion and occupation of Iraq in the bag, the US war machine lumbering along and crunching out a geopolitical configuration as thorough as it is frightening would circle back and reclaim, as it were, the Philippines as its forward base and theater of operations in Southeast Asia.

In the matter of dominance that the United States has exhibited so forcefully in Iraq, the war on terrorism bids fair to be global martial law.



A chance to boost local tourism

As I See It

Neal H. Cruz

THE PHILIPPINES is now officially in the list of countries with cases, or suspected cases, of SARS (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome), the mysterious disease that is currently scaring the whole world because it is deadly, is very contagious, and still has no known cure. We have one suspected case, a 64-year-old traveler form Hong-Kong.

With the exception of this one patient, who has recovered but is still under quarantine, there is nobody else from whom we can get the SARS virus but from travelers. In fact, SARS is rapidly spreading throughout the world because of air travel. Without knowing it, a traveler may already be a SARS carrier. And he or she may already be spreading the virus before any symptoms appear. So the questionnaire given to arriving passengers whether or not they have any of the SARS symptoms (high fever, coughing, difficulty breathing, phlegm in the throat, etc.) is next to useless. And under the quarantine measures being employed in our airports and seaports, and the big volume of arriving passengers being screened by an undermanned staff, it is so easy for carriers to get through.

The government has responded by asking Filipinos here not to go to SARS-infected countries. But hey, we should stop people from these countries from coming in, not people here from going there—so long as they don't return before the emergency is over. In fact, we should be doing what Malaysia is already doing: deny visas to people from SARS-infected countries. Local officials of Ilocos Norte are way ahead of our national officials in safeguarding their constituents form the SARS virus.

Ilocos Norte has suspended flights from Hong Kong into Laoag International Airport, a move that has been criticized by some airlines and travel agencies. But according to Rep. Imee Marcos, Ilocos officials were merely heeding the advice of the World Health Organization (WHO) to take precautions against SARS and avoid traveling to SARS-infected countries such as Hong Kong, China, Singapore, Vietnam and Canada.

"It also follows that in the process of taking precautions, you should also prevent the prospect of having this deadly virus enter this country," she said. "And it would be best to totally control the entry of planes from countries where the killer pneumonia is prevalent."

We keep boasting that we are SARS-free to attract tourists (we probably are not anymore) but the lax and sloppy quarantine measures at our ports of entry raise the likelihood that we won't be SARS-free for long.

But we are tip-toeing around more stringent measures because we don't want to offend the international community, because we are greedy for tourists. I won't be surprised if the laxity is a contribution to the anti-SARS efforts by the tourism secretary, who can be very persuasive once he starts talking (and he starts talking at the drop of a hat). He wants to take advantage of the SARS scare in the former tourist favorites like Hong Kong, Singapore, Malaysia and Vietnam and divert the tourists here so that he would have the numbers to crow about. And the tourist dollars.

But once SARS gets a foothold here, all those tourist dollars won't be enough to control the disease. Not to say the possible deaths.

I think this is a wonderful opportunity to boost domestic tourism. With Filipinos afraid to travel to other countries, they have no place to go but to local tourist spots. Except that it is so hard to travel within the Philippines. Even if you travel in your own vehicle, there are very few comfortable rest stops. And facilities in the tourist spots, except those catering to foreigners, are spartan.

The eyes of our tourism department are focused on foreign travelers (probably because they themselves like to travel to foreign land) when domestic tourism is the more steady and dependable source of income. Two-thirds of Japan's tourism income comes from domestic tourists. And even when there is a war, disease, or economic chaos abroad, domestic tourists continue coming.

What if the volume of foreign tourists drops? Tourism Secretary Dick Gordon has a good excuse: SARS. But if SARS gets here and even one Filipino dies because of our greed for foreign travelers, Gordon would be the scapegoat.

It is ironic that many Filipinos, especially the wealthy, and government officials (because they travel at taxpayers' expense) see more of other countries than of the Philippines. Why? Because there is more status in going abroad. Because the facilities here are not at par with world standards; they're not good enough for our elite. And it is so difficult to get to the tourist spots. The highways are congested with traffic. Very hard to get public transportation. No plane flights to many tourist destinations. Sea travel is slow, risky and uncomfortable. Comfort rooms are almost non-existent. If there are at all, they are repulsive.

So Filipinos prefer to go abroad where facilities are clean and comfortable. In Kuala Lumpur, you can lie down in the public bathrooms. They're that clean.

This is an area where our DOT and the Philippine Travel Authority (PTA) have been remiss: cleanliness. If they can only make travel within the Philippines pleasant and comfortable, they would already have struck a blow for domestic tourism. Even in many first class restaurants here, the smell of comfort rooms is not conducive to attracting tourists. Even the comfort rooms at the Naia smell. Comfort rooms don't have a high priority in our establishments.

Instead of WOW Philippines, I suggest we change it to SMELL the Philippines. After all, we are supposed to have plenty of fragrant flowers.

Switching channels

There's the Rub

Conrado de Quiros

THE CATHOLIC Bishops' Conference of the Philippines had a very interesting message last Sunday, the start of Christendom's "heart of darkness." This Holy Week, it said in a pastoral letter, it would be good to dwell not on a war an ocean away but on the "war right outside our doorsteps." That is "our own war against poverty and social injustice." Over the past three weeks, we have been consumed by the war in Iraq, gobbling every account by the embedded journalists of how the coalition forces fought their way to Baghdad. Let us not forget we have our own war, and have to fight our way to our own goal.

Additionally, the CBCP says, let us shift perspectives and look at a different conquest. That was Jesus Christ conquering the world not while sitting in an Abrams tank but on the back of a donkey. That was how Christ entered Jerusalem, a place itself now rocked by strife and enmity. He was not armed with weapons of mass destruction but with love and compassion. And he did not have journalists in tow but four unschooled fishermen who would later write about his triumph for generations to come.

While at this, the CBCP says, let us spare a thought for the Iraqi people. There are at least 250,000 Catholics in Iraq belonging to some 10 dioceses.

It's a good message, but not without flaws.

First off, I too have been asked by letter-writers if I haven't forgotten our own war against corruption and injustice from being riveted toward the Iraq war. My answer to that is: Not at all. It is not merely that I have not been remiss in calling attention to our local plight day in and day out since I began writing columns 15 years ago, it is also that the war in Iraq bears directly and immediately on our plight.

At the very least, that is so because of our overseas Filipino workers. There are 1.5 million of them in the Middle East who stand to be ravaged not just by the war but by their government's attitude toward it. That war, before and after, is not popular with Arabs, a fact government, which has now joined Washington in triumphalist crowing, seems completely oblivious to. That cannot bode well for our OFWs in the Gulf.

At the very most, that is so because the war in Iraq stands to change the course of everything on this planet. It is the lever that has unhinged it from its orbit and sent it spinning into frosty wastes. There is no country on earth that will not feel the effects of a collective regression into the age of empire-building premised anew on the burden of the powerful to carve a world unto its image with the sword. There is now our war against poverty and injustice on one side and the Iraqis' war against poverty and injustice on the other. They are one and the same.

Even more than that, there is no war against poverty and social justice that has no moral dimension. And that is the one thing we seem to have lost completely, our moral mooring. It is not merely that we have closed our ears to the rest of the world, not least the Pope, who has condemned that war as unjust and immoral, and chosen only to hear George W. Bush and Donald Rumsfeld, who have extolled the virtues of smart bombs. It's that we have been gloating over the prospect of profiting from reconstruction work while Iraq reels from looting and the prospect of living the way we did under Spanish, American and Japanese rule, under a foreign yoke. No war against poverty and social injustice has yet been won with that obscenely venal attitude. It's enough to make you ashamed to be a Filipino.

I agree with the need to shift channels. We've been watching the wrong ones in this war, looking at it from the perspective of the conquerors and their chroniclers. The equivalent of it is watching the events in Jerusalem two millennia ago not through the lens not of the Jewish carpenters and fishermen and denizens of Jerusalem's slums but from the point of view of Herod, Pontius Pilate and Caesar, the conquerors. The point is not just to spare a thought to the Iraqi people, or heaven forbid, the Catholics there. It is to see the story from their eyes.

Where we get this idea that we are the eternal sidekick, Tonto, when we have only been kicked in the side all the time, like a tonto, I'll never know. It compounds lack of moral scruples with lack of a sense of reality. It is the spectacle again of the fly sitting on top of the carabao and thinking it is taller than the carabao. I don't know how we can ever understand what has happened in Iraq and what will happen to the world with that perspective. From the point of view of Herod, Pilate and Caesar, the commotion in Jerusalem was just a small detail. Who the hell cared about a carpenter turned prophet being nailed on the cross? Well, no one now cares about Herod, Pilate and Caesar. But the world cares about Jesus Christ.

That brings me to love and compassion and justice. I agree that that is the thing to dwell on during this holiest of weeks, the alternative against war and aggression and injustice. But I do not mean the kind of forgiving and forgetting and reconciling the Church often means by these. I mean the kind of remembering and protesting and prosecuting that continues to rage throughout the world in the aftermath of the war. The need to shift channels is so also literally. Just shift channels on TV and print and the panorama changes radically. The war hasn't ended, it's only begun. The real war, that is, to stop a creeping tyranny. They're still taking to the streets in protest elsewhere in the world. The biggest ones were the half million people that filled the streets of Rome and the same number that filled the streets of Spain last weekend.

Peace and justice aren't two different things, they're the same thing. The only peace without justice is the peace of the dead.

* * *

Comments to dequiros@info.com.ph

We're doing our share vs pyramid scams—SEC

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

EARLIER I wrote that the frenzied investigations of the pyramid scams which have cheated thousands of Filipinos of billions of "blood money," are akin to closing the barn door after the horses have fled. So many heartaches could have been avoided if there were more vigilance about their activities. I laid the blame on the Securities and Exchange Commission and the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas.

Director Jose Tomas Syquia of the SEC's Compliance and Enforcement Department wrote that the SEC should not be blamed since "it is difficult to nip in the bud a pyramiding operation as no one will openly declare that it will engage in this activity" and it's normally done "in the guise of legal operations neither registered with the SEC nor the DTI." Oftentimes, too, he said the participants themselves sustain the scam operations and begin to complain only when the promised benefits stop, by which time the culprits have already run away.

* * *

Syquia laid the primary responsibility of preventing these scams on the Department of Trade and Industry "since many are carried out as multi-level marketing network activities." To facilitate investigation, he said the DTI and SEC have entered into an agreement to refer corporations mutually for cross-checking and follow-ups. On its own, as "preventive measures," the SEC has developed a watch list of persons or entities that have been involved in illegal activities, which is used to pre-screen applicants for corporate registration or secondary licenses with the SEC, as well as strategies to discourage "pseudo-investment scams" such as ponzi schemes and unregistered preneed plans. But he admitted that these alone are not effective in the detection of prospective investment scams.

Syquia said that "since it is impossible to monitor the activities of more than 500,000 registered entities under the SEC," there is need to provide guidelines to enable the investing public to make wise investments and detect investment frauds. But he stressed that a number of coordinating moves of the SEC with the authorities have actually caused the arrest of scam perpetrators, such as Genta Ogami of G. Cosmos Philippines who was arrested in Japan.

Still, the enormousness of the pyramid scams that have surfaced in recent months and the fact that humble citizens such as low-ranking government employees and retirees comprise the bulk of those cheated, should compel the SEC, the BSP and the DTI to exert more effort to prevent them.

* * *

Some weeks back President Macapagal-Arroyo ordered the return of the use of English in the schools, in order that we Filipinos would not lose our competitive edge over other Asians. There is wisdom in this move, as our neighbors have long awakened to the reality that they need to sharpen their English language skills if they are to become globally competitive. For instance, the Koreans have been coming here in droves, not only as tourists, but also to learn the English language from our schools. In Metro Manila and places like Baguio City, English language schools have proliferated, exclusively catering to the Koreans who stay for about three months to study. Because the standard of living is cheaper here, they are able to bring their families as a sort of vacation, especially in Baguio.

* * *

INQUIRER business features editor Margie Quimpo-Espino has been doing a good job of focusing on the success stories of various Filipino business executives who overcame the deprivation of their young days and made it to the top of the ladder by dint of persistence, hard work and developing their business skills. Yesterday she featured the much admired Juan B. Santos who just retired as CEO of Nestlé Philippines Inc. Santos used to take odd jobs in his student days here and in the US. Marge's "First Job" series has doubtless inspired many of our poor youth to persist through poverty and hardship and pursue their dream of corporate success.

* * *

One of my favorite success stories involves not a business executive but an elective official for the past 17 years—Rep. Gerry Espina of the lone district of Biliran. At the launching of former Leyte Gov. Leopoldo Petilla's delightful autobiography, "Passing Through Life," Gerry regaled us guests by recalling his impoverished days. Coming to Manila from the province, he and his brother and their mother lived for a while in an abandoned Halili Transit bus that straddled a ditch in Cubao, where he attended the Cubao Elementary School. To earn extra money he sold newspapers, vying for stock to sell with other boys from Cubao who also wanted to earn extra money. Two of those boys also became very successful: Alfredo B. Parungao, who became a key official of numerous big corporations and is now executive vice president and chief operating officer of Philippine National Oil Corp., and Juanito Aquias, who retired as brigadier general in the former Philippine Constabulary and has since joined the corporate world.

* * *

From that Halili bus, Gerry and his brother were moved to Boys Town, but he soon realized that he would have better luck outside, so he worked his way to Sangley Point in Cavite, where he shined shoes and did odd jobs for American sailors. But because of hard work, persistence and brains, he was able to graduate from Far Eastern University and landed Smith-Mundt, Ford and Fulbright scholarships to the US, returning to teach political science and public administration at the UP Graduate School and other universities and trying his hand in tri-media. Espina became a member of the 1971 Constitutional Convention and later a Metro Manila assemblyman and former labor minister of state. By 2004 he will complete three terms as congressman in a province dominated by his clan. I'm sure his story is a big source of inspiration to poor students.

Survival tips on the road

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

JUDGING from what I hear on radio and TV, and from what family, friends and even casual acquaintances tell me, there shouldn't be any problem for travelers going out of town for the Holy Week break.

That's because most everyone says he or she and the family are staying put this year, deciding that Metro Manila is the best place to be. So if we're all staying put, then those traveling out of town should face no problems on the road, right?

Another friend, though, says resorts, especially those just south of Metro Manila are experiencing a boom (more on why below), booked solid not just for Holy Week but also for the rest of the hot season. Local governments, police and the private sector are also bracing themselves for an expected onslaught of commuters this week, as motorists head for Northern Luzon, especially Baguio.

The Holy Week hegira could not have come at a worse time at the North Luzon Expressway, which is currently undergoing "rehabilitation." One side of the stretch of the expressway, from San Simon to San Fernando in Pampanga, has been dug up, constricting the flow of vehicles. It's bad enough on ordinary days and nights, but the congestion and confusion could reach nightmare proportions starting tomorrow and all the way through Easter. That's why vacationers, given a choice, have opted for points South to enjoy the holiday this year.

* * *

AUTHORITIES have already mapped out alternate routes on the North Luzon Expressway for northbound vehicles starting tomorrow, and opened "counterflow" lanes for Manila-bound vehicles starting Saturday and through Sunday. But even now, I'm hearing reports of families starting off optimistically for Northern Luzon and finding themselves, five hours later, still stuck in Pampanga. So for those deciding to brave the traffic, I wish you luck, a car air-conditioner in good working condition, and iron bladders.

Beyond sympathy, though, Petron, which has been conducting for the last 17 years a Holy Week motorist assistance project called "Lakbay Alalay," has this year teamed up with the PNCC for a traffic advisory program assisting motorists by providing travel tips and notices on precautionary measures to take before and during road travel.

For those braving the North Luzon Expressway, Petron and PNCC strongly advise motorists to aim to travel during hours when traffic along the expressway is relatively light. This means traveling at night, preferably between 10 p.m. and 4 a.m., though this could mean sharing the road with those gigantic cargo trucks; or between 11 a.m.-3 p.m., when most motorists avoid traveling because of the heat.

Still, even if you travel during these times, it's a good idea to mentally and physically prepare yourselves for a long journey. The stretch under repair, from San Simon to San Fernando, normally takes just 10 minutes to traverse, but on the average now takes an hour and a half to complete.

* * *

IF YOU must make the trip, come prepared. Take along lots of cold drinks and snacks to head off thirst and hunger pangs. Take frequent bathroom breaks, especially before approaching traffic-prone areas such as the San Simon stretch, the busy Tarlac highway, and the traffic hell of Pozzurobio in Pangasinan if you're going up to Baguio.

Ensuring that every vehicle has a "back-up" driver is also a good idea, because even the most experienced driver is bound to develop fatigue after seven or eight hours of nerve-wracking traffic. Remember, a tired, sleepy and distracted driver is a menace not just to himself and his passengers, but to everyone else on the road.

Petron says motorists should be prepared for any emergency long before setting out on the expressway. There's no excuse for hitting the road on a faulty vehicle since Petron's "Lakbay Alalay" offers free safety checks from April 1-20. At any participating Petron Service Station, volunteers are on hand to check for oil leaks, worn-out tires, glitchy brake and clutch reservoirs, a leaking radiator, a discharged battery, a stalling engine or a bad suspension (and if they check "all of the above" on your vehicle, don't even think of driving to the nearby grocery!).

If you should develop any trouble on the road, there are also "Lakbay Alalay" Camps not just on the North Luzon Tollway, but also on the SLEX, the STAR Tollway, Baguio and Tagaytay.

* * *

IN THEIR 17 years of coming to the aid of motorists during the busiest, traveling-est time of the year, the Petron "Lakbay Alalay" volunteers and their partners have rarely had to deal with major road accidents. Most of those needing their assistance, they said, are commuters facing car trouble, which speaks volumes about Filipinos' "*bahala na*" attitude even in such an elementary matter as checking one's vehicle before going on a long trip.

One summer many years ago, we were waiting at my Lola's house in Pangasinan for the arrival of a cousin and his friends who were traveling as a convoy from Manila. Suddenly, we spotted my cousin's car barreling along the highway then coming to a sudden stop some meters away. We were wondering why they didn't drive on to the house, when the front passenger door sprang open and my cousin fell unconscious to the ground. When we got to the car, we found that everyone had passed out because of carbon monoxide poisoning from a defective air-conditioner. They were all lucky to have survived, and that the driver didn't pass out sooner!

Then and there I learned a lifelong lesson on how roadway negligence can lead not just to a spoiled vacation, but to loss of life as well.

So have a safe one, all *bakasyonistas*!

Iran: Time to make up with US?

NEWS ANALYSIS

Stefan Smith

TEHRAN—Comments by Iran's powerful former president on mechanisms to resume ties with the United States have been taken by some as a sign that the war in Iraq has jolted the Islamic republic into serious discussion over the decades-old problem.

In an interview with an official periodical, Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani suggested putting the future of US-Iran relations to a referendum, backed up by a decision on the thorny issue by Iran's top echelon.

Although the Rahbord (Strategy) journal said its interview with Rafsanjani was conducted before the war in Iraq began three weeks ago, its publication came just after the fall of Baghdad.

"We missed certain opportunities, or took late or wrong measures or even did not take action," Rafsanjani said in the interview, in an apparent reference to the past failures of both Iran and the United States to thaw relations.

"Our ideology is flexible," Rafsanjani asserted.

The timing was not lost on many observers, and the former president's comments, which were picked up by the official news agency IRNA, hit the front pages of most reformist papers here.

Even though Rafsanjani, who heads Iran's top political arbitration body, did not openly call for ties to be restored, his comments marked a change of tone from the usual "Great Satan" references.

In an editorial, the pro-reform Iran News said it was "intrigued by the timing" of Rafsanjani's comments, and wondered "whether Rafsanjani gave the go-ahead for the release of this story by IRNA coinciding with the downfall of the Baathist regime next door in Iraq." Like Saddam Hussein's Iraq, Iran was lumped into an "axis of evil" by US President George W. Bush—raising fears here that the Islamic republic could be next on Washington's hit list.

That uncertainty has been compounded by the absence of diplomatic relations between Tehran and Washington—who severed ties after the 1979 revolution and the bitter embassy hostage crisis.

"The fact that such an influential figure has raised this issue now is very interesting," was the reaction of one Tehran-based European ambassador.

"Mr. Rafsanjani is an astute, pragmatic politician...so it is hard to see this as anything else than a call on the rival power groups to sit down and discuss the issue for the sake of national security." If that is what Rafsanjani intended, he has certainly gained some quick results.

Iran News wrote that while it saw a referendum as unnecessary, it was "lamentable that during the past two and a half decades, Iran's national interests have time and again been slighted and altogether ignored for petty political and factional interests." "The decision makers should simply weigh the pros and cons of the issue and if deemed advantageous to our national interests, not a second should be w[illegible]ed in reestablishing ties with the United States," it wrote.

On the other side of the political divide, the hardline Kayhan paper hit out at Rafsanjani for daring to cross a "red line"—the presence of which was illustrated by the recent jailing of a group of opinion pollsters who published a survey showing most Iranians favored restoring ties with Washington.

"Mr. Rafsanjani should not raise this matter...and should not ignore this red line," wrote the paper, reminding readers that the only figure qualified to comment on the issue was supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

Iran's foreign ministry could not immediately be reached for comment on Rafsanjani's interview.

But apparently keen to dampen any perception that Iran was showing weakness in the face of a US build-up on its borders, a source in the Expediency Council—headed by the former president—cautioned against making any "superficial analysis" that the comments were a direct response to perceived threats from Washington.

Western diplomats also cautioned that there was no US-Iran detente in sight.

"Even if there is a slight opening on the Iranian side—and I emphasize that that is a very big if—I doubt that this will be met by the American side," said a diplomat representing one of Washington's main European allies.

"It's the classic scenario in American-Iranian relations: just when one party shows movement, the other side hardens. You have to admit that Bush is not going to be the American president who makes up with [illegible]." *AFP*

I cried

YOUNG BLOOD

Lisa S. Marfori Sobreviñas

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—Ed.

WHAT'S strange about cable television is that no matter how many channels you have, from about 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., there's nothing good to watch on the boob tube. In spite of this, I switched on my TV at about 1 p.m. today, grabbed the remote control, and began channel surfing. At that time, HBO was featuring an old war movie set in Vietnam, SkyCable was giving me a hazy reception of Cinemax, the Hallmark channel showed nothing but static, BBC and CNN were still covering the ongoing war and as I wasn't in the mood to watch anything related to the war, I switched to local channels. Not even they had anything I liked. So I decided to check out one last channel before turning off the TV. I switched on Channel E! (the Entertainment Channel). . .and what I got was more than what I bargained for.

I officially began my summer vacation two days ago. When I handed in the last exam I'll ever take for my entire college life as a junior, I already knew what I wanted to do all-summer long: read, watch TV and movies, sleep, eat, hang out with family and friends, and just loaf around the house. I was caught up in my plans for this summer that I was even able to overlook the fact that while I was thinking nice thoughts about my summer, a war was happening in Iraq.

But there it was, on my TV set—the US-Iraq war. CBS News was being shown on Channel E and the scenes that flashed before me will always stay with me until the day I die. A young Iraqi boy had been hit in a US missile attack and he was crying and crying even as an American soldier was attending to him. The little boy's head was being bandaged while he was pleading (in his native tongue) to the soldiers surrounding him to stop aiming at them, stop waging war against them, stop hurting them.

I felt so bad after watching that brief news story. I still do. It was only after watching that young, innocent Iraqi boy that I really understood why many people are against the war. When the war was still imminent, I recall feeling "excited" (or maybe "very curious" is the term I'm looking for) to see what would happen the moment America fired at Iraq.

I recall asking my parents over dinner how the Philippines would figure in this US-led war. We're so far away! I always thought we'd have no important role in the present war even if our own President had announced that our country is a member of the Coalition of the Willing. I always thought I'd never get affected by this war—not directly, not personally. But guess what. I already am.

To be honest, when the war finally erupted weeks ago, I remember thinking that, at the most, I would be affected by it only as far as economics was concerned, I understood that prices of goods would skyrocket (especially oil and food). I knew I'd have to do my share of cutting back on personal and family expenses. But what I wasn't ready for, much less expecting, was being emotionally affected by this stupid war between George W. Bush and Saddam Hussein. Seeing that sad little boy crying, wailing, begging that the war be stopped tugged at my heart. I just felt so helpless, so sad. I wanted to help him, take his pain away, heal him. But I couldn't. . .mainly because I didn't know how. Seeing that young, injured boy broke my heart (even when I thought nobody could break my heart ever again).

What did that young Iraqi do to get caught in the crossfire? Why do innocent people have to get hurt in a war whose essence and validity I cannot really understand? Why can't we learn to respect the other-ness of other people? Why can't we just accept our differences and respect others? Why do we have to resort to war?

I wanted answers to my many questions. I felt so bad after seeing that clip on CBS news that I immediately resumed my channel surfing, hoping against hope that I'd find a channel that would make me forget about the little boy I just saw. But nothing good was on. Nothing good and powerful enough to make me forget the images of war I had just seen. So I quickly switched off the TV and reached for the phone. By the time I finished dialing my best friend's number, my eyes were teary. To make things worse, she and everyone else I was comfortable sharing my sadness with was either out, asleep or simply unavailable. My entire family wasn't home so I had no one to talk to.

Finally, however, I was able to get in touch with a *kabarkada* of mine, Kyla. And the moment I did, I just broke down and cried. I told her about what I had seen on the newscast and how affected I was by it. I cried because I felt so sad, so helpless, so hurt for all those innocent people dragged into the senseless war. I cried for all those unaware and unaffected by the repercussions of war. I cried for all those whose hearts have hardened and now feel nothing toward the war and other ugly realities of life. I cried for all those who have become immune to feelings of hurt and sadness for they have forgotten that pain and grief are part of life. Looking back, it's been a while since I cried for others' pain. And there's something about doing so that heals you and reminds you that you truly are a part of humanity.

Kyla said it's good I was crying because it showed I still had the capacity to feel and be compassionate. I distinctly remember her saying that crying meant I was still a believer and not a cynic. Cynics, after all, are disbelievers in man's goodness. Their hearts have been so hardened and frozen that they no longer believe in the innate goodness of people. And I think Kyla was right. Though there is a part of me that has been hurt enough to warrant my becoming a cynic, I have always chosen to be a believer in everything good and beautiful that still remains in this world. Peace is one of them.

After talking to Kyla, I texted my friend, Chuck, and asked him why God allowed the war to happen. "I have no answer," he told me, but he also reminded me that "all we can do is pray and believe our prayers are powerful weapons for peace. God is still in control."

Chuck's right, too. I believe that one day, peace will come not just in the Middle East but more importantly, I believe peace will one day rest in each and everyone's heart. I believe that one day we will no longer see young boys and girls injured and suffering or adult men and women fighting over relief goods on live TV coverage of war and famine. I believe that one day, the war will end. Peace will come. People will heal. And like always, God or Allah or whatever you want to call Him will remain in control.

Lisa S. Marfori Sobreviñas, 20, is an AB Communication student at the Ateneo de Manila University.

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The Na[illegible] of Philippin[illegible]

The hypocrisy in Proclamation No. 354

PRESIDENTIAL Proclamation No. 354, declaring Holy Wednesday and Black Saturday special holidays, was surely welcome news to most people—except for the country's daily-rated workers and certain groups of employers. The former suddenly lose their income for two days; the latter necessarily suffer a reduction in productivity, or will have to pay at least 30 percent more for the wages of employees who may be asked to stay on the job so that productivity may be maintained.

As it is, this particular holiday proclamation draws from a two-fold rationale: opportunity for Christian Philippines to ponder on the significance of Holy Week, and promotion of local tourism. Nothing, in my view, could be more contradictory! One connotes spiritual mourning, the other physical enjoyment. I do not believe that the extra holidays would truly enhance local tourism any further beyond its usual level at this time of the year. For one thing, tourists recognize no workday or holiday. For another, with or without extra holidays, the quaint customs and traditions that the Philippines is noted for during Lent season will continue to be observed and variously reenacted in the archipelago and their specific dates remain unchanged: the Passion of the Cross on Holy Thursday, the Crucifixion on Good Friday, the Resurrection on Easter Sunday, to name three.

At least, of course, as more roads lead to benches than to churches this Holy Week, the extra holidays succeed in extending the mingling of sadness and merriment in the hearts of some, even if hypocrisy dwells in between.

—RUDY L. CORONEL,
10 Venus Street, Golden Country
Homes, Alangilan, Batangas City

Unsung heroes of Pangatian

IT IS INDEED heartwarming to know that the unsung heroes of Pangatian were given due recognition 58 years after "The Great Raid" which is now considered by historians as one of the greatest rescue missions in military history.

We salute the National Historical Institute for installing a historical marker last April 6 right in the very place where it happened in Cabanatuan, giving top billing to the Filipino guerrillas led by Captains Juan Pajota and Eduardo L. Joson.

To set the record straight, there were two other guerilla captains who participated in the rescue. They were Captains Ruperto Villamin and Luis de la Cruz. With them was Capt. Carlos Layug of the Medical Corp.

All in all, there were 411 Filipino guerrillas, not 200 as reported, who were on the official list issued under General Order No. 42 of the United States Army Forces in the Far East dated February 27, 1945. Each of these gallant guerrillas were awarded the Bronze Star Medal in fitting rites at Agbannawag, Rizal, Nueva Ecija, where a US Army band was dispatched there to provide the stirring music for the field ceremony. Gen. Douglas MacArthur also sent a US Army general to pin the coveted medals on the Filipino guerillas, according to the personal accounts of the late Prof. Lif Roa who was himself a staff sergeant of the HQ Company. Present at the 1945 rites were three other guerrillas who are still alive today—Paterno V. Viloria, Basilio Payawal and Eugenic Jongo.

To honor the 411 Filipino heroes of Pangatian, may we implore the authorities to install some kind of a Wall of Remembrance in the vicinity of the Pangatian War Memorial where their names will be etched for all to see. It is a tribute they all truly deserve.

—FLORIÑO A. FRANCISCO, M.D.,
Nueva Ecija Doctors' Hospital,
National Highway,
Cabanatuan City 3100

Only abiding by a ruling

THIS is in response to letter writer Erickson M. De Jesus, acting chair of Anak Balayan Inc. ("Playing politics with the environment," PDI, April 5, p.10) on the revocation of Department Administrative Order 17 (DAO 17), the Guidelines on the Delineation of Municipal Waters.

We did not "becloud[s] the issue of environmental and food disaster with a pathetic and opportunistic shifting of responsibility" as Mr. De Jesus writes. The DOJ's legal opinion ruled that DAO 17 was erroneously issued by the DENR and that jurisdiction over this issue falls within the powers of the DA. We are only abiding by this ruling.

We stand by our decision to revoke DAO 17 as it rests on sound legal grounds. This does not in any way lessen our support for the plight of small fisherfolk and their interests. Nor does it mean that we will no longer protect our coastal/marine resources. This is part of our mandate and we will continue to do so. However, we are duty-bound to abide by the law.

Allowing this legal infirmity to go on without rectification would have eroded our democratic institutions and we would be remiss in our sworn duty to abide by the rule of law and to put public interest over and above everything else.

—ELISEA G. GOZUN, secretary,
Department of Environment and
Natural Resources, Visayas Ave.,
Diliman, Quezon City

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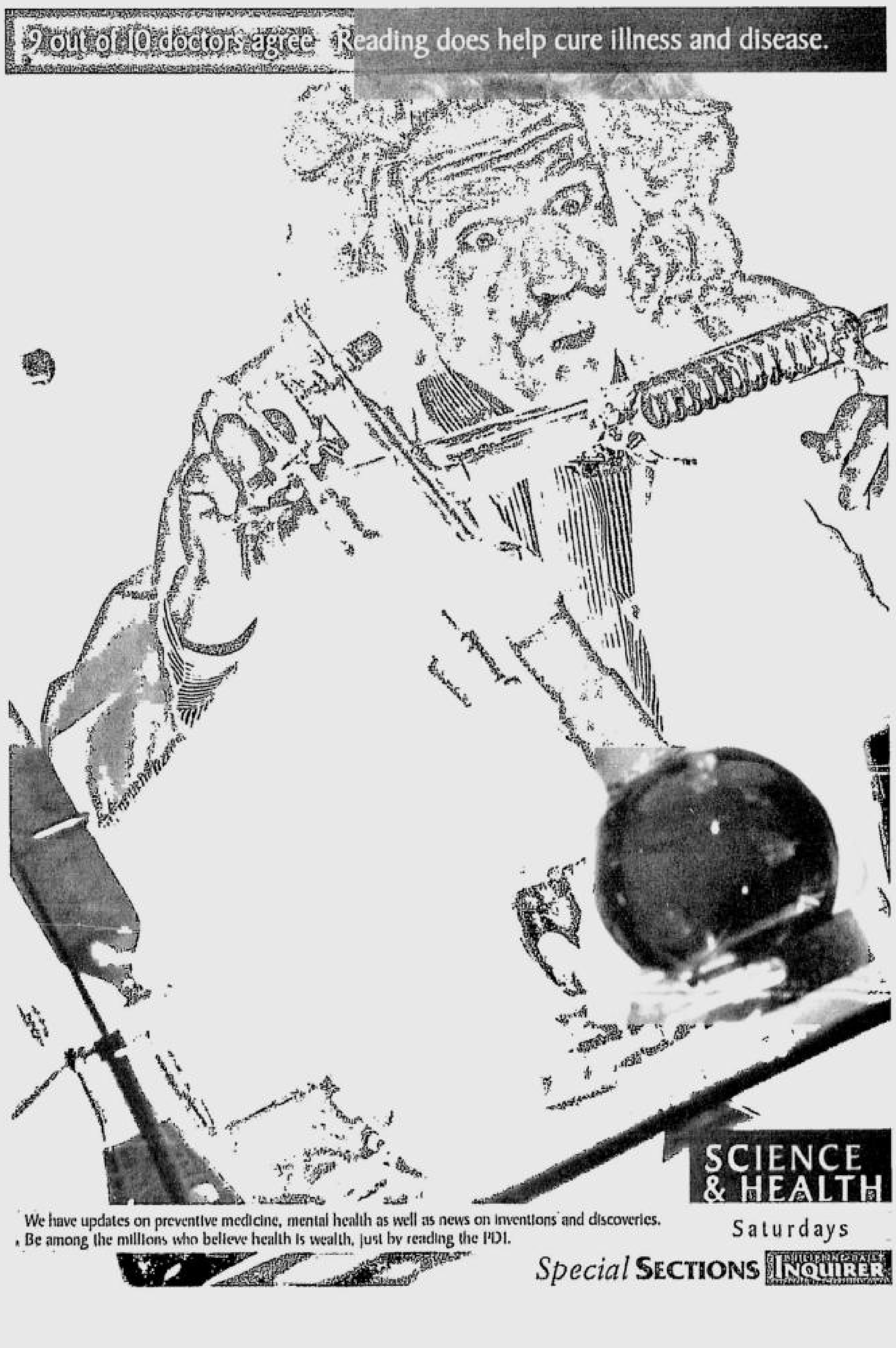

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Not against P1.5B SARS fund

WE just wish to clarify the position of Sen. Teresa Aquino Oreta on the move by Malacañang to set aside P1.5 billion as contingency fund to prevent the spread of the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome in the country, which was briefly touched upon by Mr. Neal Cruz, in his April 10, 2003 column.

Contrary to what Mr. Cruz implied, Senator Oreta was never against Malacañang's move to set aside such a hefty amount to contain the spread of SARS in the country. She even welcomes this timely move by the government but, at the same time, she also suggested that if any portion of the fund remains unused, it should be channeled to preventive health care programs to fight other highly infectious diseases that continue to plague the population, such as TB, malaria, hepatitis and measles.

We wish to assure Mr. Cruz that Senator Oreta fully agrees with him that no amount is too much to protect Filipinos from the dangers of SARS. She just wanted to point out that any excess amount to fight this deadly disease would be better used to prevent the spread of other equally infectious and fatal illnesses that continue to be serious health risks to our countrymen.

—BRIAN RAYMOND S. YAMSUAN,
chief of staff for political affairs,
Office of Sen. Teresa A. Oreta

Point of clarification in Kuratong case

MAY I REACT to Ms Belinda Cunanan's column in the April 3, 2003 issue of the INQUIRER lest the uninitiated may think that my dismissal of the Kuratong Baleleng cases was erroneous.

I dismissed the cases in March 1999 for lack of probable cause, following the doctrine in Allado vs. Diokno (232 SCRA190) where the Supreme Court ruled that if the judge finds no probable cause for the issuance of a warrant of arrest, he can dismiss the case right there and then, sans arraignment and trial. At that time, the rule on provisional dismissals (Sec. 8, Rule 117, Revised Rules of Criminal Procedure) was not yet in existence as this new rule was promulgated only in December 2000. To imply therefore that my dismissal did not comply with the requirements of Section 8, Rule 117 is inaccurate and misleading. It is more accurate to say that the Supreme Court, in its decision in May 2002, directed the lower court to determine whether my dismissal can qualify as a "provisional dismissal" under Section 8, Rule 117, taking into consideration the requirements of said new rule.

In its new decision, the Supreme Court reversed itself in the sense that instead of asking the lower court do so, it made its own determination that the dismissal in March 1999 does not qualify as a provisional dismissal under said Section 8, Rule 117.

—WENCESLAO I. AGNIR JR.,
34 P.V. Kalaw St.,
Tierra Pura Homes,
Quezon City

On the road to Damascus

PINOY KASI

Michael L. Tan

THE WAR rubble in Iraq hasn't been cleared yet and we're already hearing saber-rattling from US officials, this time directed against Syria.

These new threats don't surprise American political analysts who have been claiming, for some time now, that the Iraqi invasion is part of a broader war plan of a dangerous "neocon" faction within the Bush administration.

"Neocon" is an abbreviation of "neoconservatives" espousing an aggressive unilateralism, with the United States taking action on the international front regardless of what the consequences might be for other countries. In military terms, this unilateralism includes the right of a "preemptive strike," invading another country on suspicion that they may threaten US security. This certainly was the case with Iraq with claims that Saddam Hussein had weapons of mass destruction (WMDs). With Hussein ousted, the United States now has a base in Iraq from which they can reconfigure Middle East politics, possibly with new preemptive strikes against Syria or Iran. Already, we're hearing excuses for new hostilities, as Syria is warned about harboring fugitives (Saddam and friends) and those elusive Iraqi WMDs. (Amazing how these weapons are able to make their way into Syria.)

Just who are these neoconservatives and what is their agenda?

Charles Kupchan, a professor of international relations at Georgetown University and a senior fellow of the Council on Foreign Relations, says there are actually three conservative blocs within Bush's Republican Party: the neoconservatives, the "liberal internationalists" and the "isolationists."

Kupchan identifies himself with the "liberal internationalists," people who favor greater US cooperation with other countries. Among the liberal internationalists are George Bush Senior, Colin Powell and Henry Kissinger.

The isolationists, on the other hand, are conservatives who feel the US government should concentrate on domestic problems. Kupchan believes Bush began his presidency more inclined to this isolationism but came under the influence of the neocons after the 9/11 attacks.

The warmongering neoconservatives include Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, the deputy defense secretary Paul Wolfowitz (who is believed to be the real power behind Rumsfeld), former CIA director James Woolsey and Elliott Abrams, recently appointed to head Middle East policy at the National Security Council.

Michael Lind, writing in the New Statesman, explains these neocons used to be in the center or left of the political ideological spectrum but drifted to the far right over the years. These neocons are mainly intellectuals who work in government or out of think tanks such as the American Enterprise Institute. They have no mass base but have close ties with the Religious Right, conservative Christians who are fiercely anti-Muslim and opposed to the creation of a Palestinian state. The neocons are also supported by a network of mass media practitioners and several media networks, mainly that of Rupert Murdoch (including Fox News).

In the 1990s, the neocons formed a lobbying group called the Project for the New American Century (PNAC), whose website proclaims itself as a nonprofit organization "dedicated to a few fundamental principles: that American leadership is good both for America and for the world; that such leadership requires military strength, diplomatic energy and commitment to moral principle; and that too few political leaders today are making the case for global leadership."

Lofty, if not arrogant, words that are found too in PNAC documents. In the 1990s, PNAC published a series of public letters calling on the Clinton administration to invade and occupy Iraq, bomb Hezbollah (a Palestinian group) bases in Lebanon and to threaten Syria and Iran with US attacks if they continued to sponsor terrorism. The Clinton administration ignored these calls.

How did the neocons come into power? Lind says it was a matter of "happenstance and personality," as the neocons took advantage of Bush's "ignorance and inexperience." Unlike the elder George Bush, who was a more sophisticated politician, George Junior was a "thinly educated playboy" who couldn't get into the University of Texas and who failed repeatedly in business before becoming governor of Texas. Following a midlife crisis, he became a born again Christian. With what Lind calls a "Texan cultural combination of machismo, anti-intellectualism and overt religiosity," Bush was easy prey for the neocons, especially as the president looked for vengeance after the 9/11 attacks.

William Pfaaf, writing in the International Herald Tribune, describes the neocons' actions as based on three characteristics. First, the neocons are "motivated by fear of terrorist bands, armed by Islamic states, wielding weapons of mass destruction, even though this is politically, technologically and militarily highly implausible." Second, Pfaaf says they are naïve, almost "racist" in believing "Arabs" can't govern themselves. Third, the neocons are fanatics, believing "it is worth killing people for unproved ideas."

This combination of fear, ignorance and fanaticism offered a perfect fit with Bush's values and personality. That is what so terrifying, the fate of the world now teetering around decisions of a small group of men manipulating a foolish and naïve president (who in turn is adored and emulated by another foolish and naïve president across the Pacific).

I'm still skeptical about this whole neocon bit but with the threats directed against Syria, I couldn't help but think of an event that happened some 2000 years ago. There was a bright young Jewish scholar named Saul, fervently anti-Christian, who embarked on a trip to Damascus, the present capital of Syria. Something happened on the way to Damascus, starting Saul's conversion to the Christianity and to a new identity as Paul. It's unlikely we're going to see a massive change of heart on the part of Bush and the neocons, but in a symbolic way, the world has taken its journey to Damascus. Perhaps on this journey, we might find enlightenment about the US agenda for the world's future.

The WORLD

Editor Luverne B. Gueco

SARS CRISIS

HK probes death of younger, fitter patients

HONG KONG—Doctors in Hong Kong on Monday started prescribing heavier doses of medicine during the early stages of SARS after the surprise deaths of six relatively young patients with no other illnesses.

However, one expert voiced fears that the virus believed to be causing severe acute respiratory illness has mutated.

Many of Hong Kong's 40 SARS deaths have been elderly people or patients suffering from other chronic health problems, such as heart or kidney disease. But six of eight people whose deaths were reported over the weekend ranged in age from 35 to 52 and had no prior health problems.

Hospital Authority spokesperson Elinda Luk said Monday officials were investigating what had happened.

Hong Kong officials had said previously that most patients who had no aggravating health conditions seemed to respond well to a treatment of anti-viral drugs and steroids.

The acting director of the Hospital Authority, Dr. Ko Wing-man, told lawmakers on Monday that doctors were increasing the dosage and applying that treatment earlier to try to cure people before they have to receive intensive care.

But he warned of potentially severe side effects including heart, blood and kidney problems.

On a radio show Monday, the senior executive manager of the Hospital Authority, Dr. Liu Shao-haei, said some of the younger patients were hospitalized when they were already in serious condition, and their health worsened even after they received intensive care.

Ko also told a radio talk show that researchers were studying other treatments, including traditional Chinese medicines, but that they had been applied only on a small scale.

Despite efforts to find an effective treatment for the disease, an expert expressed concern that the virus has mutated after he observed that patients at the Prince of Wales Hospital, which was hard-hit by a SARS outbreak, displayed differences in infectiousness, symptoms and the severity of their illness.

Preliminary investigations revealed that the coronavirus believed to be causing SARS has "mutated, but not to a great extent," said biochemist Stephen Tsui of the Chinese University of Hong Kong on Monday.

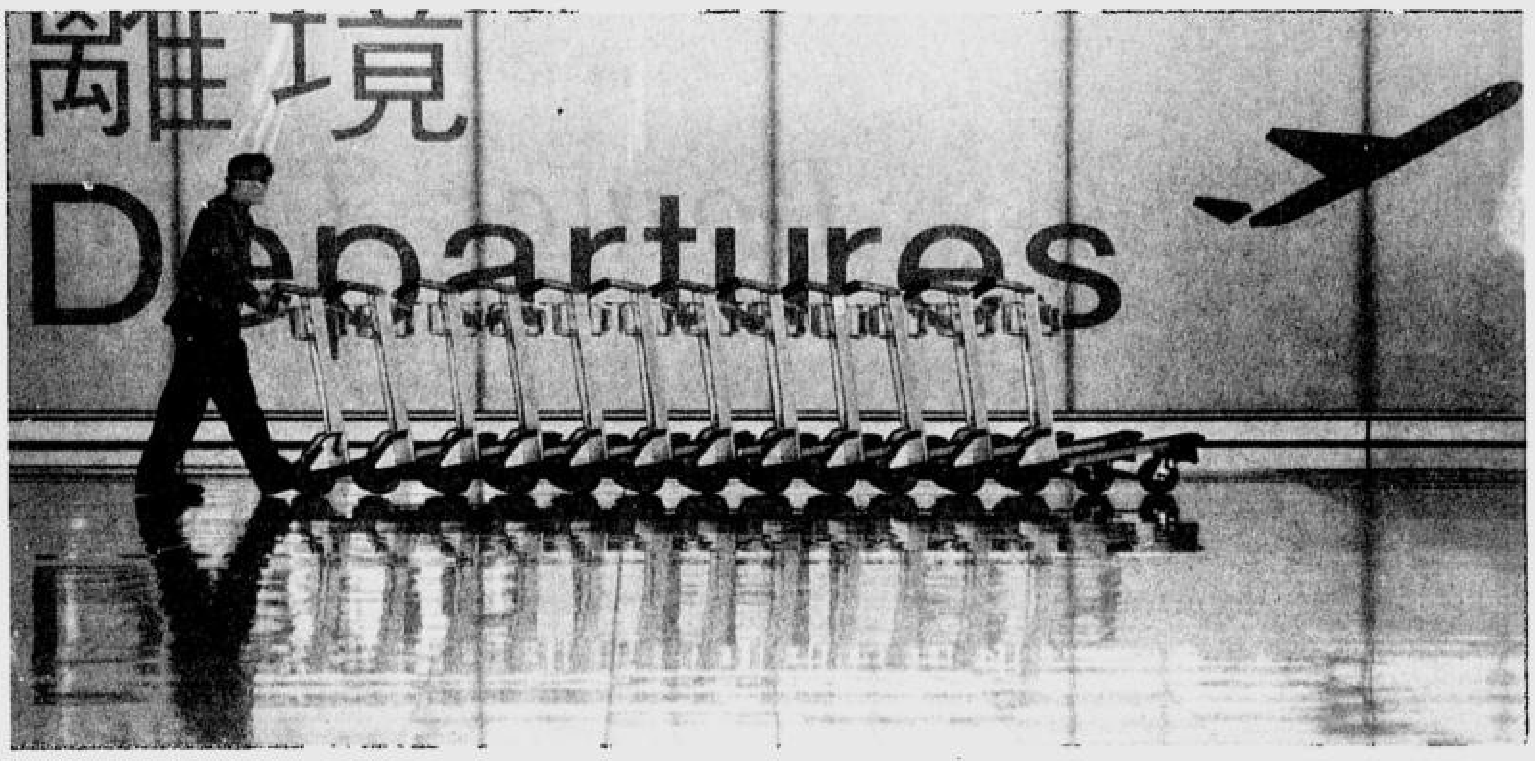
"We want to find out whether it's because the virus is different that causes such differences," he said. "If we can figure that out, we can then predict which patient will be afflicted more severely."

Hong Kong has reported 1,150 SARS cases, and although 223 people have recovered and been discharged officials here have been unable to stop the spread of the disease. New cases have been cropping up daily.

Critics have accused Hong Kong officials of responding slowly to the crisis, charges that were repeated Monday in the legislative panel session.

"When they have made the decisions, they have carried them out slowly and have given rise to many problems," pro-democracy lawmaker Fred Li said. "It's like spilling a basket of crabs, and then picking one up at one time."

Health department spokesperson Tang Kwok-keung defended Hong Kong's fight to contain SARS and disputed contentions officials had acted slowly. *AP*



AN AIRPORT worker pushes a line of trolleys while wearing a mask as a precaution against the SARS virus on April 13 at Hong Kong's Chek Lap Kok airport. Cathay Pacific, Hong Kong's largest air carrier, has cut flights by nearly 50 percent as a result of the growing concerns surrounding the outbreak and origin of SARS, but has no plans to cut all flights at present. Passenger numbers have dropped by approximately 25,000 per day into Hong Kong. GETTY IMAGES

SARS in China grave, premier acknowledges

BEIJING—Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao described his country's SARS outbreak as "grave," as the global death toll from the mysterious disease reached at least 137.

More than 3,000 people worldwide have been infected or suspected of being infected by Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome. Most cases have been in Asia, where worried governments have tightened screening of passengers at airports and invoked strict quarantine rules.

New Zealand said Monday it would deploy nurses at international airports to monitor incoming travelers displaying symptoms, which include fever, aches, dry cough and shortness of breath.

Australians who regularly donate blood will be banned from doing so for two weeks if they've just returned from a SARS-affected country, authorities said.

However, concern seemed to tapering off in Thailand, which has yet to announce any cases of SARS being transmitted locally. It is considering relaxing some tough prevention measures.

The situation remained serious in China, where experts suspect SARS began and whose communist government has been accused of failing to release enough information about the outbreak.

Wen warned that China's economy, international image and social stability might feel the impact of the disease, the state-run Xinhua News Agency said.

"Much progress has been made in combating the disease . . . but the overall situation remains grave," Xinhua quoted Wen as saying Sunday at a national meeting on SARS.

Wen's comments, also carried by newspapers on Monday, were a striking change from recent government assurances and were the highest-level admission that SARS was a threat to China.

The official death toll from the mysterious illness on the mainland hit 64 on Monday, with three fatalities reported in northern Shanxi province and one in the Inner Mongolia region, also in China's north, according to the World Health Organization.

China has reported more than 1,300 cases of infection, most of them in the southern province of Guangdong, which has reported 45 deaths. The mainland's death toll is reported separately from Hong Kong, where 40 people have died.

Five Mongolians were hospitalized with suspected SARS after visiting Inner Mongolia in China, a WHO official said Monday in Ulan Bator. The vast, sparsely populated North Asian nation of 2.4 million people hasn't reported any confirmed cases of SARS. *AP*

World scientists complete human genome sequence

LONDON—Scientists have completed the finished sequence of the human genome, or genetic blueprint of life, which holds the keys to transforming medicine and understanding disease.

Less than three years after finishing the working draft of the three billion letters that make up human DNA and two years earlier than expected, an international consortium of scientists said on Monday the set of instructions on how humans develop and function was done.

"We put out the draft sequence as a way of getting it out to scientists as quickly as we could. It gives them something to work with and get going, but the aim was always to generate a reference sequence for the human genome," said Dr Jane Rogers, head of sequencing at the Wellcome Trust Sanger Institute.

"It's a bit like moving on from a first attempt demo music tape to a classic CD," she explained.

The Human Genome Project has already aided scientists in discovering a mutation that causes a deadly type of skin cancer and accelerated the search for genes involved in diabetes, leukemia and childhood eczema.

The completed sequence will help scientists identify the 25,000-30,000 genes in humans, including those involved in complex diseases such as cancer and diabetes.

Researchers from 120 countries have downloaded information which has been freely available on the Internet since the rough draft was announced in June 2000.

"We shouldn't expect immediate major breakthroughs but there is no doubt we have embarked on one of the most exciting chapters of the book of life," Professor Allan Bradley, director of the Wellcome Trust Sanger Institute, said in a statement.

The Institute sequenced nearly one-third of the genome. Scientists in the United States, France, Germany, Japan and China have also worked on the publicly funded Human Genome Project. *Reuters*

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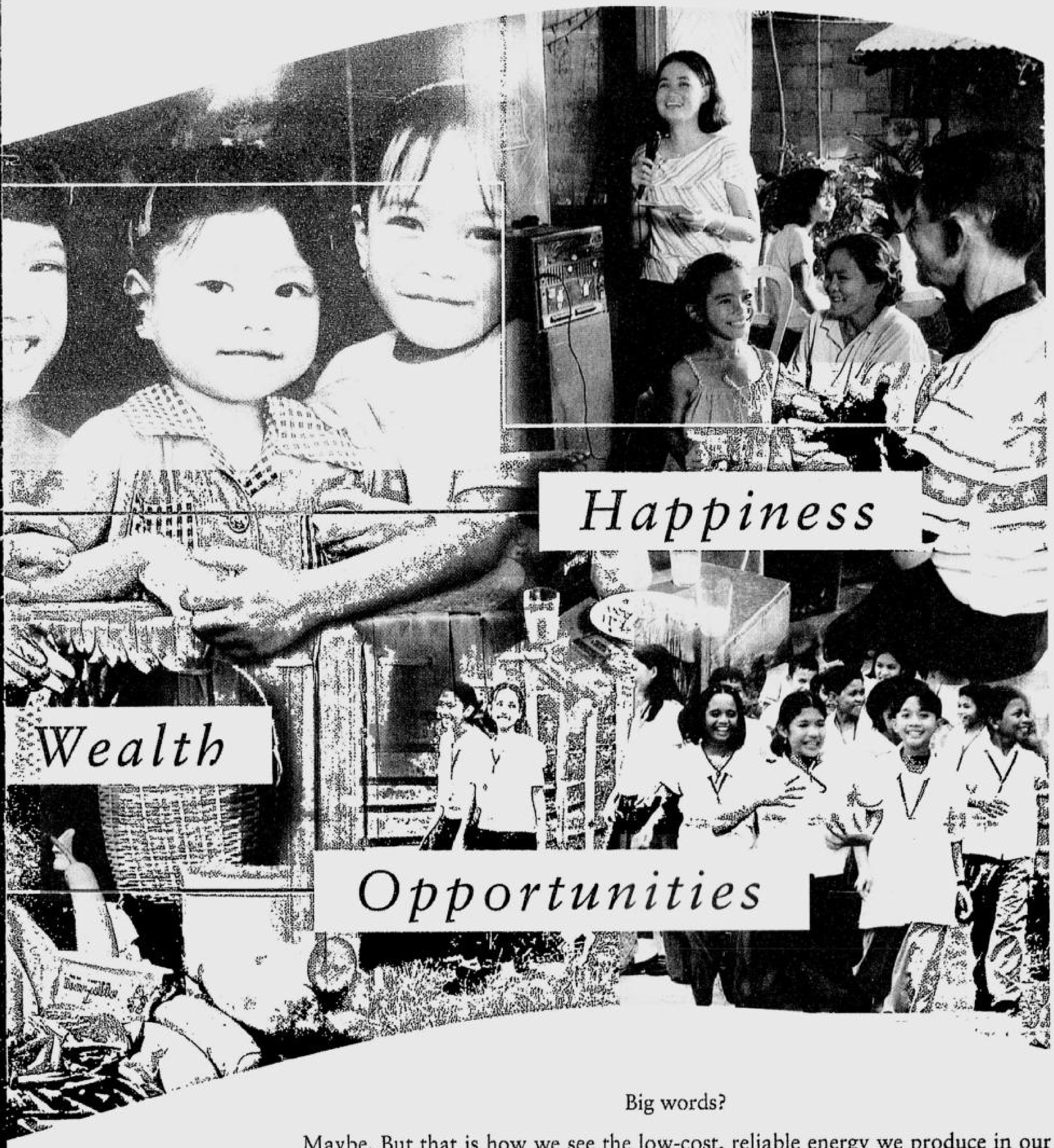

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Bush stops short of threatening war on Syria

WASHINGTON—The Bush administration, increasingly angry with Syria, wants to ensure that Damascus gets the message sent by Saddam Hussein's collapse and stops harboring leaders of Iraq's toppled government.

President George W. Bush was careful to stop short of threatening war against Syria, though he warned the country not to take in Iraqi leaders. He also charged that Syria had chemical weapons.

"They just need to cooperate," Bush said Sunday.

Britain also said Syria had to come clean, but its officials were more emphatic in downplaying the prospect of bringing the war there.

"We have made it clear that there are no plans for Syria to be next on the list," Foreign Secretary Jack Straw told reporters in Manama, Bahrain, the first leg of a Mideast tour to discuss rebuilding Iraq. "But there are questions that the Syrians need to answer."

Other top US officials made plain the administration's growing frustration with Syria.

Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld said the majority of foreign fighters in Iraq were from Syria, brought in by the "busloads." On one bus, military authorities found leaflets that offered rewards for killing Americans, and several hundred thousand dollars in cash, Rumsfeld said on CBS television.

Rumsfeld also said top members of Saddam's government had fled to neighboring Syria. US-led forces captured Saddam's half brother in northern Iraq, and said he had planned to cross the border.

Rumsfeld warned Syria last month to stop sending military equipment—including night-vision goggles—to Iraqi forces. "We consider such trafficking as hostile acts and will hold the Syrian government accountable for such shipments," he said.

Asked Sunday whether Syria had heeded those demands, Rumsfeld replied, "Not noticeably."

Bush and Rumsfeld seemed eager to make sure that Damascus understood the message in the coalition's toppling of Saddam.

"People have got to know that we are serious about stopping the spread of weapons of mass destruction," Bush told reporters.

Noting that Syria is on the state department's list of countries that sponsor terrorism, Rumsfeld told NBC television: "Being on the terrorist list is not some place I'd want to be."

Syria's Deputy Ambassador to the United States Imad Moustapha said the Bush administration's flurry of charges was a "campaign of misinformation and disinformation" meant to divert attention from the "human catastrophes" taking place in wartime Iraq.

Asked whether Syria was a good candidate for his "axis of evil," Bush laughed and said, "We will deal with each situation as it arises." AP

US believes friendly fire downed jet, killed pilot

CAMP AS SAYLIYAH, Qatar—A Patriot missile was believed responsible for downing a US Navy fighter jet 12 days ago, killing the pilot, the US Central Command said Monday.

It would be the third time a Patriot missile failed to distinguish friendly from enemy targets in the war in Iraq.

The F/A-18C Hornet was shot down on April 2 as it was conducting a bombing run near Karbala, about 80 km south of Baghdad. The pilot, Lt. Nathan White, 30, was killed.

At the time, there were conflicting reports about whether Iraqi fire or friendly fire had downed the jet.

"Indications are that the F/A-18 went down as a result of being hit by a Patriot missile," Navy Capt. Frank Thorp, a US Central Command spokesperson said Monday.

"An investigation is under way to determine why the Patriot missile battery engaged the F/A-18," he said.

On March 23, a US Patriot missile battery fired on a British Royal Air Force Tornado GR4 aircraft, killing the two crew members.

On March 25, a US F-16 fired on a US Patriot missile battery south of Najaf after the battery's radar locked on the jet. The battery's radar was damaged.

In the April 2 incident, the Hornet was flying a bombing run from the aircraft carrier USS Kitty Hawk in the Gulf when it was shot down during fierce fighting between US troops and Iraqi Republican Guards. It became the first US fighter jet downed in the war.

Since then, two other jets have been lost over Iraq.

An A-10 "Warthog" was shot down near Baghdad's airport on April 8 by what Central Command believed was an Iraqi surface-to-air missile. The pilot ejected safely and was rescued by US troops.

On April 7, an F-15E Strike Eagle fighter jet went down near Tikrit. There has been no word on the fate of the two crew. AP

AN M1A1 Abrams tank of the US Army 3rd Infantry Division stands guard in front of a Saddam Hussein mural outside the non-operational Daura Power Plant on April 13 in southeastern Baghdad. Since coalition forces took control of Baghdad last week, US and Iraqi authorities have made it a priority to restore power to the city after an apparent failure of the power grid weeks ago. Coalition forces continue to occupy power plants and a number of government ministry buildings throughout the city in an effort to curb looting and maintain order. GETTY IMAGES

4 Pakistanis convicted in bombing of US Consulate

KARACHI—A Pakistani court convicted four men on Monday in a deadly June 2002 car bombing outside the US Consulate in this southern port city. Two men were given the death penalty and the other two received life terms. One man was acquitted.

The four—all alleged members of the Harkat-ul Mujahedeen al-Almi Islamic extremist group—were convicted of murder, conspiracy, terrorism and other charges by the special antiterrorism court.

The June 14 car bombing outside the US Consulate killed 12 Pakistanis and wounded 50 others. The jeep used in the attack failed to penetrate the consulate's high walls, and its victims were all passers-by and security officials just outside the US facility.

The court sentenced Mohammed Imran and Mohammed Hanif to death by hanging. Mohammed Sharib and Mufti Zubair were each sentenced to life in prison, while a fifth defendant, Mohammed Ashraf, was acquitted. The four convicted were also fined about US$9,000 each.

The men were defiant after the verdict, with Imran and Hanif making the victory sign with their hands and even passing out sweets to their lawyers.

"I am satisfied," said Imran. "This death sentence is a blessing for me, although our deaths have been planned by the government to please America."

Added Hanif: "All infidels of the world are united under the banner of America to eliminate Muslims."

Hanif's lawyer, Abdul Waheed Katpar, said he would challenge the verdict.

"The verdict itself is contradictory. If there was evidence against one, there was evidence against all, yet my client got the death penalty while others got life and one man was acquitted," he told The Associated Press. "This is a faulty judgment and I will file an appeal tomorrow." AP

N. Korea shifts policy toward US after war

SEOUL—South Korea's top security adviser said Monday that the US-led war in Iraq influenced North Korea's decision to be more flexible in its policy toward the United States.

For months, North Korea demanded direct talks with the United States about the communist nation's nuclear activities. But on Saturday, the North signaled that it would be willing to accept US-proposed multilateral talks.

"North Korea's softening position seems to have mainly come because it wasn't in an advantageous position internationally," Ra Jong-il, the security adviser, told South Korean reporters. He was quoted by the Yonhap news agency.

Analysts had speculated that a long and difficult war in the Gulf would weaken US resolve and strengthen North Korea's hand, but the war there is winding down as US-led forces pursue holdouts loyal to Saddam Hussein.

"This war on Iraq seems to have become a significant opportunity in deciding the landscape of international politics," Ra said.

In comments reported by the North's KCNA news agency on Saturday, a North Korean foreign ministry spokesperson said North Korea "will not stick to any particular dialogue format" if the United States "is ready to make a bold switchover in its Korea policy for a settlement of the nuclear issue."

South Korean President Roh Moo-hyun's office said in a statement that the North's comments over the weekend were in response to efforts by Seoul and other nations to resolve the nuclear crisis peacefully.

"We consider the North Korea's statement as a suggestion it could accept multilateral talks and we plan to continue making efforts to resolve the North Korean nuclear issue peacefully through dialogue," it said.

North Korea has demanded a nonaggression treaty with Washington, which has ruled out a treaty but says some form of written security guarantee might be possible. North Korea also wants economic aid.

It has also accused the United States of planning to invade after the war in Iraq.

Roh's National Defense Adviser Kim Hee-sang dismissed such concerns on Monday, citing a strong US-South Korea alliance and the presence of 37,000 US troops stationed here.

Even if Washington wants to launch military action against Pyongyang, "the United States would not do so without the consent from South Korea," he said.

The apparent North Korean shift could ease tension on the Korean Peninsula following recent North Korean military maneuvers, US-South Korean war games and Washington's dispatch of additional long-range bombers to the region.

Even if talks on North Korea's nuclear programs begin, a negotiated solution is likely to be a long and complex process.

On Sunday, US President George W. Bush welcomed the North Korean statement. AP

WORLDBRIEFS

18 Kuwaiti prisoners found

ABU DHABI—Eighteen Kuwaitis held since the 1991 Gulf War were among prisoners kept in an underground shelter in Baghdad, Abu Dhabi satellite television reported Monday, quoting a former Iraqi colonel. The men "are alive... and in an underground shelter near the military tribunal in the Al-Khadra district," the channel said without naming its source. The colonel, now running the civilian administration in the central city of Najaf, was quoted as saying he knew the soldiers in charge of guarding the prisoners and told American and British forces about them on Monday. "The prisoners were held by the Republican Guard and moved from one (prison) to another. Before the ground war began they were put in the underground shelter in Baghdad" and remained there, he said. Kuwait says 605 people disappeared during Baghdad's occupation of the emirate in 1990-1991 and believes many were kept in Iraqi jails. AFP

Protecting rights in counterterrorism

GENEVA—The top UN human rights body appears ready to approve a proposed resolution demanding countries protect rights in the fight against terrorism, Mexican diplomats said Monday. "After Sept. 11 and this big struggle against terrorism, we need to ensure that human rights are directly protected," said Juan Jose Gomez Camacho, director general for human rights at the Mexican foreign ministry. The Mexican proposal, which faces a vote in the 53-nation Human Rights Commission next week, would allow the body to examine the methods countries are using to combat terrorism to see if they violate human rights standards, though it would have no power to force changes. Human rights groups claim some of the measures used by countries to combat terrorism may break international human rights laws and treaties. They are particularly concerned that some Western countries have strengthened immigration regulations and rules targeting people from Islamic countries. AP

EU sanctions against Burma

LUXEMBOURG—EU foreign ministers agreed Monday to extend and beef up sanctions against military-ruled Myanmar for another year. The ministers also decided to extend the list of people subject to a visa blacklist and freezing of assets. "The Council (of ministers) can find no credible reason to account for the failure of political will on behalf of the Burma/Myanmar authorities to agree to a definitive timetable for the return of democracy," they said. The ministers also agreed to strengthen the arms embargo, on or before Oct. 29, unless ministers decide otherwise. The EU in October 1996 banned all contacts with members of the Burmese junta and later imposed an arms embargo and economic sanctions, including a freeze on assets held in EU countries by members of the regime. AFP

Jemaah Islamiyah spiritual head charged with treason

JAKARTA—Prosecutors on Monday filed treason charges against the suspected spiritual head of Jemaah Islamiyah, the al-Qaida-linked terror group, an official said.

Abu Bakar Bashir, a 64-year-old cleric, was accused of conspiring "to set up an Islamic State of Indonesia and overthrow the government of the Republic of Indonesia," according to the indictment submitted to Jakarta's Central District Court.

Bashir, who allegedly had close ties with Jemaah Islamiyah, a militant group operating across Southeast Asia, was arrested soon after the Oct. 12 nightclub attacks in Bali that killed 202 people, mostly foreign tourists.

Investigators initially said he would be charged both with trying to overthrow the government and with a plot to assassinate President Megawati Sukarnoputri, but the latter charge was subsequently dropped.

Bashir's trial is expected to start end of April, prosecutors said.

Although police say Jemaah Islamiyah carried out the Bali bombings, Bashir has not been linked to that deadly attack. Instead, he is being accused of involvement in a string of bombings of churches throughout Indonesia at Christmas 2000, in which 19 people died.

The indictment said that Bashir had "authorized the plan to bomb churches in Batam and other cities in Indonesia."

If found guilty, he faces life imprisonment.

"We hope that the court can form a team of judges as soon as possible to start the trial," said chief prosecutor Hasan Madani. AP

Palestinian home blown up; 11 held

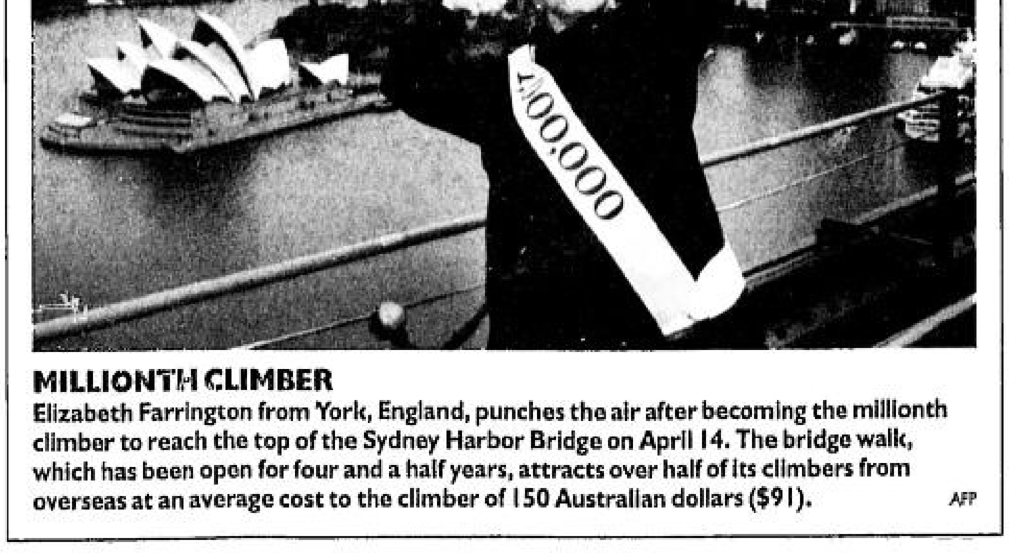
HEBRON, West Bank—Israeli troops blew up overnight the house of a Palestinian militant who had committed an attack in Israel and captured 11 Palestinians elsewhere in the West Bank, sources from both sides said Monday.

The 11 prisoners included five members of the radical Islamic group Hamas who lived near this West Bank town, an Israeli army spokesman said.

Meanwhile, soldiers demolished the two-story home that had housed 15 relatives of Jamal Rajoub in the southern West Bank village of Doura, Palestinian witnesses said.

Rajoub, a member of Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat's Fatah movement, was arrested in March 2002 after firing his automatic weapon into a municipal hall in the southern Israeli town of Ashdod.

Since August of last year, the Israeli Army has blown up almost 200 homes belonging to Palestinians accused of carrying out attacks against Israel or against Israeli settlers or soldiers in the occupied territories. AFP



MILLIONTH CLIMBER

Elizabeth Farrington from York, England, punches the air after becoming the millionth climber to reach the top of the Sydney Harbor Bridge on April 14. The bridge walk, which has been open for four and a half years, attracts over half of its climbers from overseas at an average cost to the climber of 150 Australian dollars ($91). AFP

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AFP chief says RP-US war games have started

ZAMBOANGA CITY—While Philippine and American officials are still hammering out the over-all concept of Balikatan 03-1, two of its three components have started in full swing, AFP chief of Staff General Narciso Abaya told the INQUIRER.

Abaya said one of the components, dubbed "the Security Assistance Package" valued at $25 million, was being held here while the other components were being held in Luzon and the Visayas.

"The trainings being held here are the Light Infantry Battalion training, the training for non-commissioned officers as well as the intelligence fusion training," he said.

The humanitarian assistance under the Bayanihan Exercise 2003 being held in Basilan was also recently included in the Balikatan 03-1.

"So it's not accurate to say that the conduct of this training, which is the Balikatan 03-1, has not been approved yet. The real score there is that we are now going to place the ongoing activities within the ambit of Balikatan 03-1," he said.

Defense Secretary Angelo Reyes told the INQUIRER that the Balikatan 03-1 has more or less similar features as the previous war games.

He said in general, Balikatan 03-1 would be held in Western Mindanao. When pressed for the exact area where the exercise would be held, Reyes said it would be in Sulu.

"Since the training component has started in this city, and the humanitarian assistance in full swing in Basilan, the operational aspect will be held in Sulu," he said.

Sulu Gov. Yusop Jikiri evaded questions about the holding of the Balikatan in Sulu.

The government had earlier been warned of the possibility of bloodshed if American forces should set foot on the island-province.

Jolo folk said they still vividly remember the Bud Daho massacre in the early 1900s, where American forces killed hundreds of women, children and the elderly alongside Tausug warriors.

"I prefer to say nothing this time. I'll just be caught in the middle if I say yes," Jikiri said.

Jikiri said what he wanted was for the national government to conduct a massive information campaign about the conduct of the war games in Sulu.

Reyes also confirmed that US forces would be deployed in Sulu but only for the conduct of humanitarian and civil affairs.

"They will support (the exercises) in terms of intelligence, communications and mobility assitance to troops, but fighting will still be done by the Filipino soldiers," he said.

Reyes also confirmed an earlier report that the Balikatan 03-1 would have a bigger budget than its predecessor. *Julie S. Alipala, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Boracay folk prepare fight against casinos

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr.
PDI Visayas Bureau

ILOILO CITY—Parishioners of Boracay Island are holding demonstrations starting this Holy Week to protest plans of putting up a casino in the world-famous island-resort.

The parish council of the Holy Rosary Parish, the lone parish in Boracay, is leading the prayer rally on the island on April 26 to dramatize their opposition to the plan, said Rev. Fr. Isauro David, parish priest.

"The people would like to show their sentiments," said David, also social action director of the Kalibo Diocese.

The island has a population of 12,000, 90 percent of whom are Catholics.

Opposition to the casino will be presented during the Lenten season. "The negative effects of the casino will be part of the liturgy," said David.

He said the theme of one of the 14 Stations of the Cross would depict the evils of casinos and gambling.

SC strips seamaster's wife of compensation for husband's death

By Delmar Carino
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

BAGUIO CITY—A shipmaster's wife lost $176,400 (P9.26 million) and more than P2.1 million in damages when the Supreme Court here ruled that the amounts that she had received had been awarded by a body "without jurisdiction."

This means that Evelyn Tolosa, who received the award from a Manila labor arbiter, will have to file and prove anew before a regular court that the death of her husband, Capt. Virgilio Tolosa, was due to the negligence of the owners of MV Luna, his ship.

The SC's third division, chaired by Associate Justice Reynato Puno, declared as null and void the decision of the labor arbiter that MV Luna owner Qwana Kaiun and the ship's manning agent, Asia Bulk Transport Services Inc., were guilty of gross negligence.

Tolosa, hired as vessel master, suffered a slight fever aboard MV Luna while cruising from Yokohama, Japan, to Long Beach, California, on Nov. 7, 1992. Due to lack of sufficient medical attention, Tolosa died eight days later.

Acting on the complaint of Evelyn Tolosa, the labor arbiter found the ship guilty of violating employer-employee relationship and directed MV Luna to pay Tolosa $176,400 in lost income, P1,238,328 in interest, P200,000 in moral damages, P100,000 in exemplary damages and P612,472.87 in attorney's fees.

The lost income award was based on Tolosa's expected earning capacity until he reached 65 years.

But the SC, in an 18-page decision issued here, said the complaint was not employer-employee connected but based on a dispute that should be heard before the regional trial court. It said the dispute should not be heard by the labor arbiter's office, an administrative body under the Department of Labor and Employment.

In nullifying the award, the SC said Tolosa's prayer for damages was based on provisions of the civil code and not on employer-employee relationship as defined by the labor code.

Evelyn Tolosa said the ship's medical officer failed to regularly monitor her husband's condition and keep a medical record. She added that the other ship officers never initiated actions to save her husband's life.

In its decision, the SC said these allegations referred to negligence of the other ship officers who were not employers or employees of Tolosa.

"The case does not involve the adjudication of a labor dispute but the recovery of damages based on a quasi-delict," the SC said.

It said that the case should be filed with the regional trial court, which has "the power to hear and decide a controversy," on the case.

"While it is true that labor arbiters have jurisdiction to award not only reliefs provided by labor laws but also damages, these reliefs must still be based on an action that has a reasonable and causal connection with the labor code," the SC ruled.

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ake dollars

UERTO PRINCESA CITY—Two men were ught in the act of selling fake dollars at a mon-y changer in this city. The suspects, identified as Emil Sayson, 40, and Ruben Lolen, 35, residents of Tabon, Quezon, Palawan were caught during an entrapment operation on April 5. Police said that before the entrapment, one of the suspects' victims went to a money changer to convert his four fake $100 bills into pesos. When asked about the source of the dollars, the ictim told the police that these were only sold to him for P3,000 for every $100 bill. The suspects are now detained in the provincial jail and are facing charges of estafa and violation of Central Bank regulations.

Jofelle Tesorio, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Fire razes town hall

LEGAZPI CITY— The municipal capitol of Talisay, Camarines Norte turned into ashes on Wednesday destroying at least P10 million in property, according to Supt. Igmedio Bondoc Jr., Camarines Norte provincial fire marshal. Rolando Magana, senior fire officer of the Bureau of Fire Protection in Camarines Norte, said the fire that started at about 5:45 p.m. was put out only at past 6 p.m. because the town had no fire truck. The first firemen arrived from Daet only at 6:18 p.m. In Masbate City, Mayor Socrates Tuazon said the fire that hit the city's entire commercial block on Tuesday destroyed about P200 million in property and left at least 66 families homeless. *Ronnie Lorejo and Joyce Mejillano, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Levy sought

GUINOBATAN, Albay—At least 400 coconut farmers here urged the government to speed up the release of the coconut levy fund promised by President Macapagal-Arroyo to 164,000 farmer-members of the Cocofund. Dioscoro Olidana, president of the Mayon Coconut Farmers Cooperative here, said it had been three months since the President handed over a P700-million check to Noel Cabrera, chair of the United Coconut Planters Bank Finance and Development Corp. He said the fund would be used for the cooperative's anti-poverty project. Minda Arellano, Philippine Coconut Authority regional manager, earlier said her office has not yet received even a single centavo from the coco levy fund.

Michael B. Jaucian, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Vater lack hit

OAS, Albay—Thousands of water consumers here have complained of lack of water for more nan a week now despite the installation and operation of a P36.5-million water system last onth. To provide residents with water, the local government unit has to fetch water from neighboring Ligao City and Polangui town using its fire truck. Mayor Jesus Reario II said the water station in Barangay Balogo could serve nly 400 households. Oas town has about .000 households.

Michael B. Jaucian, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

ank robbed

BUTUAN CITY—Two armed men robbed a local branch of the First Consolidated Bank in Cabadbaran, Agusan del Norte shortly after 8 a.m. on iday. Bank manager Nemencio Doglas said ore than P100,000 in cash were lost to the robbers as they fled using his Isuzu pick-up. Less an an hour later, Doglas' car was seen abandoned in downtown Butuan. The robbery in abadbaran, about 30 kilometers north of this ty, was the first in the Caraga Region in decades. Senior Supt. Benhur Monggao, regional chief of the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group, said he received reports that the bank did not employ security guards making it highly vulnerable to crimes. *Franklin A. Caliguid, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

die in smashup

TA. MARIA, Isabela—Four persons were lled and seven others were seriously hurt arly Friday when a wayward 10-wheel truck ollided with an ambulance along the Santiago-Tuguegarao Road in Barangay Naganacan here, police said. Killed were Imelda agaysay, Bonifacio Pancilag, Prazer Pancilag nd another man. Police arrested the truck river, identified as Henry Ballado, 12 hours fter the accident. He was charged with multile homicide due to reckless imprudence. Reports said the ambulance from Aurora town as about to fetch Alfredo Pancilag, one of those injured, in Piat town when the trailer uck hit it at 3 a.m. *Villamor Visaya Jr., PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

lights to Baguio

THE Baguio Country Club (BCC), announced at special chartered flights to and from Baguio "Corporate Air Inc." has been arranged on April 16, Holy Wednesday; April 17, Holy Thursday; April 20, Easter Sunday; and April 21, Easter Monday. This is in response to the request of BCC members and the anticipated traffic at the North Expressway due to ongoing construction ere, according to Anthony de Leon, BCC general manager. For reservations call BCC Manila ffice: Tel. Nos. 526-5106; 400-8387 to 89; Fax No. 526-5105 or Baguio Main offices: Tel. Nos. 074) 442-5060 to 68 and Fax No. (074) 442-6501/442-7674.

'Honoris Causa'

UNDERSECRETARY Amado D. Valdez of the Presidential Commission on the Visiting Forces Agreement was recently awarded the degree of Doctor of Humanities "Honoris Causa" by the Laguna State Polytechnic College Los Baños ampus during its commencement exercises held recently. Valdez was cited for his services nd for being pro-God and pro-environment, ording to a press release. Valdez, former w dean of the University of the East College of w, earlier served as government corporate ounsel and national legal aid director of the Integrated Bar of the Philippines. Valdez initiated such projects as the "Barefoot Lawyers Program," decongestion of jails and training of paralegals.

Miners' attitudes blamed for Diwalwal risks

BAGUIO CITY—The government will have to deal with miners at the gold rush area on Mt. Diwata in Monkayo, Compostela Valley, instead of responding to a lobby that blames a top Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) official for a March 12 tunnel collapse, a mine official said here.

Diosdado Gales, one of two Cordillera-based mine safety engineers who inspected the gold rush area when the government took over the controversial site last year, said some miners there betrayed a *"patay kung patay"* (dying is inevitable) attitude when they belittled government warnings about dangerous mine tunnels.

Gales, also a government mine safety engineer, said the MGB had acquired the expertise of Cordillera miners because they were veterans of some of the oldest mine firms in the country. Gales is a 14-year veteran of the Itogon Suyoc Mining Corp. His companion, Ed Austria, the Cordillera mine safety director, had worked for Benguet Corp., the country's oldest mine.

"Although we regret the deaths, the tunnel collapse could not be blamed on (MGB chief Horacio) Ramos because we recommended certain areas as dangerous when we inspected the mine site. The collapsed tunnels were prohibited areas," Gales said.

MGB officials said only two small-scale miners have not been accounted for by an MGB search and rescue operation. The MGB said two missing miners were with 17 others when the tunnel, named Australia, caved in.

The other miners managed to come out or the tunnel, which had been declared a dangerous zone and off limits to mining on Feb. 12 last year.

Leyte Rep. Eduardo Veloso, chair of the House committee on natural resources, had quoted "unofficial sources" when he claimed that 500 people were buried alive by the cave-in. But Franco Tito, Mt. Diwata barangay captain, denied the reports.

Gales said he was surprised to see how miners there worked. "Nothing was professionally done, and miners took extensive risks inside tunnels we already considered dangerous," he said.

"I was shocked to see them work without hard hats, without safety apparel, and we had to keep reminding them that the tunnels needed to be moored and secured again by new wooden beams," Gales said.

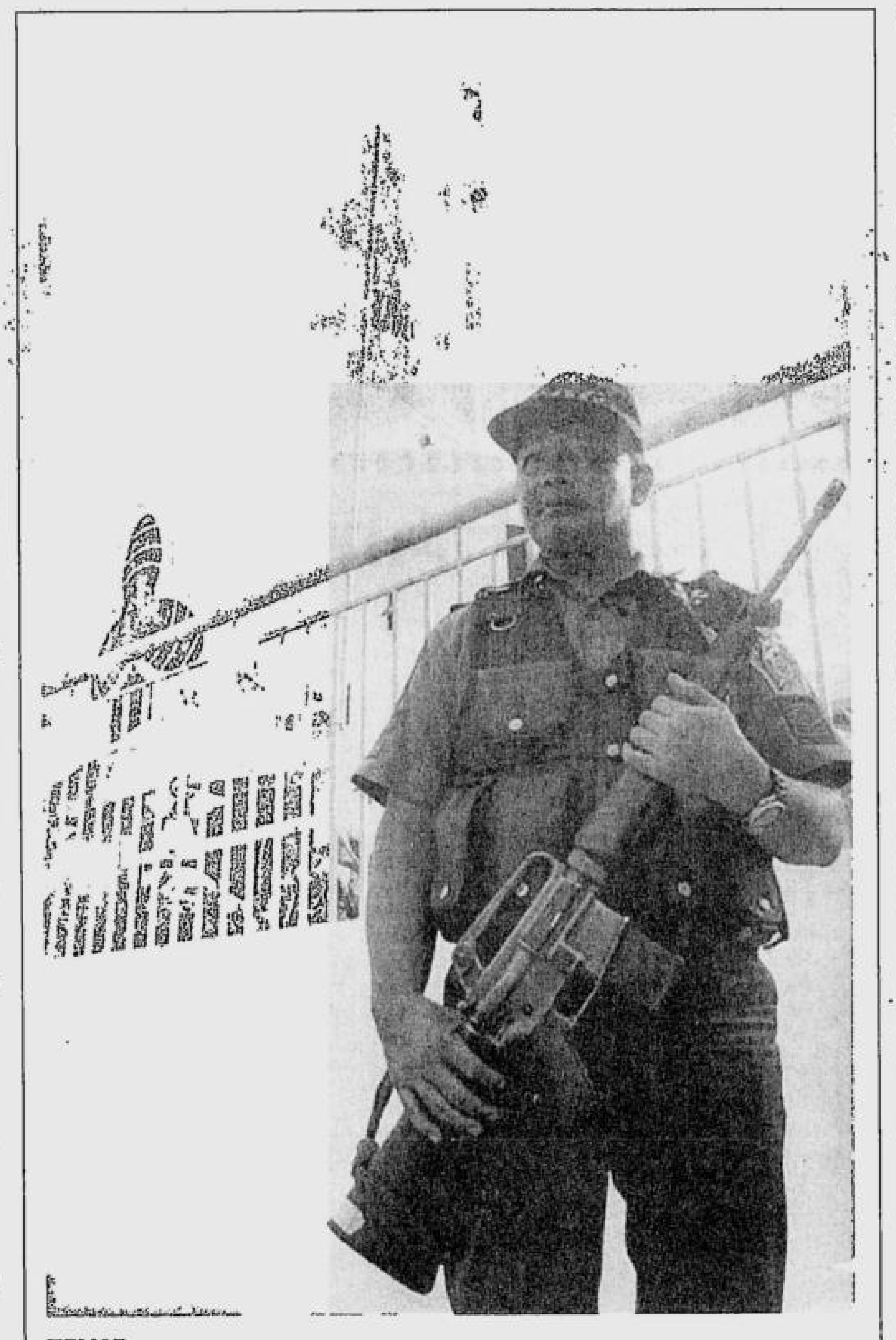
"But the small-scale miners there did not seem to be concerned. I asked for detailed underground maps, and not one of the miners could show me anything, not even the service contractors (could)," he added.

The government had adopted a mine contracting system being tested in Itogon by Benguet Corp. in transacting sharing ventures with the gold rush miners.

Benguet Corp. had leased out its old mine tunnels in Benguet last year to local service contractors—all small-scale mining operators—for a share of their production.

Gales said "service contractors could not show (MGB) anything but sketches of the underground tunnels," which span 10 kilometers each, and which interconnect underground.

He said expert Benguet miners would not have penetrated the area. "I also did not try to venture into the tunnels anymore when I saw the condition of the soil and the rocks there. A collapse would have been inevitable," he said. *Vincent Cabreza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau, and Anthony Allada and Joselle Badilla, PDI Mindanao Bureau*



TENSE REUTERS

A policeman lugs an Armalite rifle while standing guard outside the Metropolitan Cathedral in downtown Zamboanga City. Security is tight in the city following a series of bombings there and in Davao City believed perpetrated by terrorist groups.

Town's police chief sacked over escape of suspect in blast

GENERAL SANTOS CITY—The Office of the Deputy Ombudsman for the Military has suspended for six months the police chief of Sarangani town for alleged grave misconduct and gross negligence of duty.

Supt. Willie Dangane's suspension order, dated Jan. 20, was approved by Orlando Casimiro, deputy Ombudsman for the military based in Diliman, Quezon City.

The suspension followed the escape on Oct. 26 last year of Abdul Basit Usman, one of the suspects in the April 21, 2002 Fitmart bombing where 15 civilians were killed and 64 others were wounded.

Usman was arrested July 21 last year by the Special Operations Group of the Central Mindanao Police during a raid on his lair in a remote village in Esperanza town, Sultan Kudarat.

The 35-year-old suspect, said to be an Afghan-trained bomb expert, escaped while under the custody of the Sarangani Provincial Mobile Group led by chief Insp. Aucelyto Cabang.

Police officials in the region blamed the prosecutor's office for the delay in the filing of the multiple murder and multiple frustrated murder cases against Usman.

Usman was not immediately committed to jail because his name was not included in the original charge sheet filed against the suspects in the Fitmart bombing.

The Sarangani police had already submitted an amended complaint with Usman's name included in the case.

The case remains pending before a local court here.

Shortly after Usman's escape, the Ombudsman sent two officers to investigate and determine whether there was negligence on the part of the Sarangani police in handling a high-profile crime suspect.

The Ombudsman's action was apparently an offshoot of President Macapagal's order directing the PNP hierarchy to "deal harshly and decisively" against the incompetent police officials.

After the investigation, antigraft investigation officers Ricardo A. Sullano and Gina L. Villamor filed charges of grave misconduct and gross negligence against Dangane and three other police officials.

Included in the charges were Senior Supt. Bartolome Baluyot, former Central Mindanao Police director; Chief Insp. Aucelyto Cabang, Provincial Mobile Group chief and PO1 Baltazar Francisco Jamero Jr., duty officer on the day Usman escaped.

The three police officials were also included in the Ombudsman's six-month preventive suspension order.

The Ombudsman investigators recommended the suspension of the respondents so they could not "influence or prejudice the case filed against them."

On March 10, Dangane's lawyer filed a motion for reconsideration.

Dangane's lawyer said the suspension has no legal and factual basis.

Dangane said he had issued written and verbal orders to his men to place the suspected bomber under tight and constant watch. *Aquiles Z. Zonio, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

GenSan killings still puzzle cops

GENERAL SANTOS CITY—Police are still puzzled over the possible motive behind the killing of a village official and his friend late Friday at the plaza here.

The victims, identified as Joey Maglasang, a councilor of Barangay Lagao, and his friend Marciano Fernandez, a bank employee, were gunned down by a still unidentified suspect shortly before midnight Friday here while on board a private jeep.

Police are still investigating why the victims were in the area at that hour.

The two victims suffered multiple bullet wounds in their bodies. *Aquiles Z. Zonio, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

5 nabbed suspects yield $190,000 in fake money

CAPAS, Tarlac—Police arrested five suspects after they tried dealing $190,000 worth of counterfeit US dollars in $100 denominations at a restaurant in the southwestern town of Concepcion on Saturday morning.

But what surprised the policemen is the suspects were also carrying 300 fake US dollars in $1 million denomination.

Supt. Renato Pornillosa, Capas police chief, identified the suspects as Pampanga residents Teddy Santillan, 42, of the City of San Fernando; Job Velasquez, 39, of Arayat; Rosalinda Tolentino, 48, of Sasmuan; Roland Sandico of Angeles City; and Agnes Sison of Mabalacat.

Senior Supt. Mario San Diego, Tarlac police director, said with the suspects' arrest, they have prevented what could have been a widespread selling of counterfeit dollars in the province.

San Diego ordered the police chiefs of Capas, Concepcion and Bamban, the areas where the suspects were reportedly operating, to determine the source of the counterfeit dollars and where the suspects manufacture and keep the fake money.

Pornillosa said they decided to entrap the suspects in a third transaction in Concepcion on Saturday. He said they bought smaller quantities of the fake dollars in earlier deals at P1,000 for every $100 dollar bill.

"We invested a lot of 'show money' in the third deal," Pornillosa said.

San Diego said the successful operation was the result of efficient police intelligence work "wherein crimes are being prevented before they are carried out."

According to San Diego, a number of bank and money shop robberies in the province were also foiled by good police intelligence work.

He said charges have been filed against the suspects for selling the counterfeit money. *Ronaldo Dizon, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

People, NGOs, agencies enter pact to save trees

BACOLOD CITY—Concerned residents, government agencies and nongovernment organizations have vowed to work together to protect the remaining forests of Don Salvador Benedicto town, Negros Occidental.

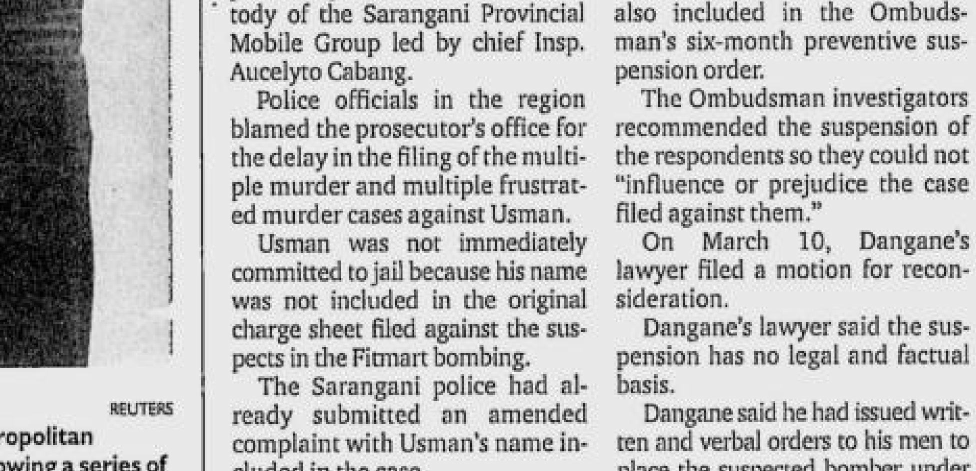
Their representatives signed a memorandum of agreement on Thursday in Barangay Bagong Silang, Don Salvador Benedicto town, about 47 kilometers northwest of this city.

Under the agreement, the signatories vowed to protect the remaining forests in the area and also provide alternative sources of livelihood to residents living near the woodlands.

"We need to preserve the forest in the light of global warming," said Eva De la Merced, executive director of the Broad Initiatives for Negros Development Inc.

Raul Lorilla, provincial environment and natural resources officer, said trees in about 70 hectares of forest in Barangay Bagong Silang were felled by illegal loggers.

The agreement also strengthened a Community-Based Forestry Management Agreement with 50 families living in Barangay Marcelo, Calatrava by providing them sources of livelihood other than cutting trees. *Carla P. Gomez, PDI Visayas Bureau*



BULACAN WELCOME PHOTO FROM LACSON OFFICE

Officials and teachers of the Bulacan National Agricultural State College in San Ildefonso, Bulacan give a warm welcome to Sen. Panfilo Lacson, who has declared his intention to run for president in 2004. Lacson was speaker at the graduation rites of the school.

Gov't upgrades facility to handle SARS

From page A1

The money for the construction of the rooms—which are designed to prevent the spread of lethal viruses—will be taken from the P15 million that President Macapagal-Arroyo released yesterday for the upgrading of the facilities of the Research Institute for Tropical Medicine (RITM) in Alabang. The RITM and the San Lazaro Hospital in Manila are the two government hospitals designated to handle suspected SARS cases.

RITM head Dr. Remigio Olveda said the P15-million fund would also be used to put up in a week's time a laboratory in which to test blood samples of probable SARS patients.

In a statement, Health Secretary Manuel Dayrit said the negative-pressure rooms would also help protect medical workers from getting infected.

Surprise visit

The President made an unscheduled stopover at the RITM after attending the graduation rites of the PNP Academy in Silang, Cavite, yesterday morning.

She told the RITM medical staff not to be discouraged by "these people who are mocking us," apparently referring to a recent survey among expatriate business executives in Asia.

According to the Political and Economic Risk Consultancy (PERC) survey, the Philippines is seen as scarcely prepared to deal with a possible SARS outbreak.

Singapore, Japan and Hong Kong were seen as best equipped to handle such a medical crisis among the 12 Asian countries included in the survey. The Philippines landed a poor seventh.

CONSCIOUS that the Philippines is one of the "probable" countries that could be infected by SARS, Saudia Airlines crew don their masks on arrival at the Naia. ROGER MARGALLO

"We have some sectors who are mocking us because we're not world-class, [but] how come we're SARS-free?" the President told the RITM staff.

She added: "I would like to tell the world again that we're doing our best to keep the Philippines SARS-free. What you're doing is no less than heroic, and I salute you for that."

On Friday Ms Macapagal announced that the country had its first "probable SARS case," a 64-year-old male foreigner who was likely infected while in Hong Kong.

Health officials said the patient was cured, but would be confined for another week.

"We don't even know if that first case was conclusively SARS. Even that is an important fact," the President pointed out.

But because of the PERC survey result, she said, she had instructed health officials to coordinate with their counterparts in Singapore, Japan and Hong Kong "since they're supposed to be so good" in dealing with SARS.

"[All these criticisms] don't give a hint of recognition to the support of our [overseas Filipino workers] who have been doing their best to prevent SARS from coming into the country," she added.

Edgardo Manda, general manager of the Manila International Airport Authority, told reporters that Hong Kong authorities had agreed to keep travelers, including OFWs, from leaving the territory if they are found to have fever, one of the known symptoms of SARS.

Manda has just met with Hong Kong airport authorities to agree on protocols to prevent the spread of SARS. He will next meet with airport authorities in Singapore.

'All OK'

Olveda said the RITM was continuing to monitor the health conditions of Filipinos who have been in contact with the foreigner who was the country's first probable SARS case.

"All of them are OK. No one is exhibiting SARS symptoms," he said, adding that the patient had gotten well enough to be discharged from the hospital in four days.

Olveda also said the patient had been very cooperative with the government's wishes for him to be kept in isolation a little longer.

The patient's blood samples had been sent to Japan for testing. The results will be known in four weeks.

In a statement, Ms Macapagal said the PERC survey result was a "putdown that doesn't lend a hint of recognition to the valiant efforts done by our government agencies and our communities."

She pointed out that the World Health Organization still regarded the Philippines as "SARS-free" despite the first reported probable SARS case here.

"We are doing our best to keep it at that. But we are not being complacent," she said.

The President ordered the SARS crisis management team headed by Dayrit to "maintain active, real-time contact with officials from Singapore, Japan and other countries and find out what measures they have taken to prevent the spread of the virus."

"We will adopt any proven methods here to protect our people," she said.

The PERC asked 1,072 business expatriates in 12 Asian countries and territories to grade their confidence in their host country's ability to deal with major medical crises.

The survey was carried out in January and February, when SARS was not yet seen as a major threat.

On a scale of 0 to 10, with zero the best possible grade, Singapore scored 2.33; Japan, 4.0; and Hong Kong, 4.21.

Taiwan and Thailand tied at 5.25, and Malaysia scored 5.33.

In seventh place was the Philippines with 6.60. South Korea followed with 7.0; Vietnam, 7.38; China, 7.50; India 8.0; and Indonesia 9.14.

For comparison, the United States scored 0.86; Britain, 2.08; and Australia 2.14.

China and Hong Kong are the worst hit by the mysterious virulent disease that has so far afflicted more than 3,200 people and killed 122 others worldwide.

The PERC criticized China for refusing to disclose the extent of the disease's spread there.

SARS is believed to have originated from the southern Chinese province of Guangdong in November 2002. It was brought to Hong Kong from where it was spread globally by travelers.

The PERC said the issue in the global SARS scare was not just fear but confidence in a government's ability to deal with it.

"The more the disease spreads, the more that people living in those locations lose confidence in the system's ability to cope with the problem," it said.

Down to 60 percent

At the Laoag International Airport, passenger traffic has gone down to 60 percent even in the absence of an order to ground remaining direct flights from countries with confirmed cases of SARS.

Air Philippines was the first to cancel its passenger flights through a memorandum informing the Air Transportation Office that its Hong Kong-Laoag leg had been cancelled beginning yesterday.

But flight schedules to Laoag from Kaoshiung in Taiwan and Guangzhou in China remained despite low passenger demand.

In the past, passenger arrivals from Hong Kong averaged 1,000 monthly and peaked beginning April when OFWs came home for the Holy Week.

But Carlos de Mesa, officer in charge of the ATO-Laoag, said Air Philippines' passenger traffic from Hong Kong had dropped by 60 percent since SARS began spreading in March.

Based on ATO records, the Hong Kong traffic to Laoag dropped from 1,280 passengers (March 1-22) to only 208 passengers (March 23-31).

De Mesa said the Air Philippines memo did not specify when it would resume its Hong Kong-Laoag flights. *With reports from Norman Bordadora in Manila; Cristina Arzadon, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

SARS threat shoos away cop chiefs

By TJ Burgonio

THE CONFERENCE of the Asean Chiefs of Police (Aseanapol) set in Manila next month has been deferred because of anxiety over the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome.

It would have been the first time for the Philippine National Police, headed by Director General Hermogenes Ebdane Jr., to host the conference in the history of the 23-year-old Aseanapol.

The annual five-day gathering is aimed at tackling regional security concerns. Last year's host was Cambodia.

Deputy Director General Virtus Gil, newly designated deputy chief for operations, said the majority of the 10 Asean member-nations had agreed to defer the holding of the conference because of the SARS epidemic.

Quoting Director Hercules Cataluna of the Directorate for Plans, Gil said top PNP officials had recommended to their Asean counterparts that the conference be shelved.

He said police officials from Brunei, Burma, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Cambodia and Vietnam had communicated agreement with the recommendation, and those from Laos and Thailand had yet to reply.

Gil said the deferment was necessary.

"It would be a nightmare if an infected person enters the country," he said. "Just think of the implications. What if the officials make a call on the President and later on one of them is confirmed to be infected? Can you isolate Malacañang?"

NO MORE WARS! BUILD PEACE

The military victory of US-led coalition forces through tremendous force does not lessen the illegitimacy and immorality of the war in Iraq that was waged in defiance of the United Nations.

Rather, the overwhelming superiority—in terms technology, number, and budget—of coalition forces, compared with the puny if fierce defense of the Iraqi forces further put in question the justifications for the war. This is self-defense by the US? Where are Iraq's weapons of mass destruction that could have been used in its own defense?

While there is cause to celebrate the removal of the oppressive and brutal regime of Saddam Hussein, we ask, especially from our wonderful experience of people power, could not the Iraqi people have been otherwise supported in their empowerment and self-liberation? Despite the scenes of jubilation, there are also reports of many Iraqis in Baghdad weeping for the humiliation of military occupation.

With such "victory", what lies ahead? We are deeply concerned about the thousands of casualties among Iraqi civilians, the many wounded children and women, overflowing the hospitals. As members of peace formations and civil society organizations who have protested against this unjust war, our hearts cry out at the suffering and loss of lives on all sides. We must not forget the victims of war.

We believe that the UN should take the decisive role in the immediate transition to a new Iraqi leadership. The real security of the US and its allies will be better guaranteed if they leave Iraq at the soonest time, and use their considerable resources to help ensure a peaceful homeland for Palestine and relieve poverty in the Middle East region. The deep anger and resentment among the Arab peoples in the region must be acknowledged and justly addressed.

In our own country, the implications of this war must be considered carefully and discussed broadly. We ask the Macapagal-Arroyo government to take the high ground and not let our economic desperation cloud our humanitarian vision and support. We protest the entry of US forces through Balikatan, particularly in Sulu after the US-led war in Iraq has killed thousands of the *ummah* or community of Muslims. Most especially, we urge the government to act immediately to end the internal conflicts in our own country, especially in Mindanao, through a return to ceasefire and peace negotiations, and the fulfillment of justice and anti-poverty programs.

At this time when the threat of terrorism, in the world and in our country, is made the rationale for wars without regard for displacement and suffering of communities or rights of individuals, let us stop to think. Let us overcome the fear that makes us aggressors of unseen enemies, that makes us create terrorists of the other. We need to recover our humanity and caring, our respect for each human person.

Let us keep faith with peace, as we continue to work for justice.

AKBAYAN! Citizen's Action Party • Aksyon para sa Kapayapaan at Katarungan (AKKAKPKA) • All Out Peace Groups • Bagong Bandila • Balik Kalipay • Caritas-Manila • Caucus of Development NGO Networks (CODE-NGO) • 11:58 Movement • Gathering for Peace • GZO Peace Institute • Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation-Association of Major Religious Superiors of the Philippines (JPIC-AMRSP) • KOMPIL2 • Kaalagad • Kilusang Gomburza • National Peace Conference • Philippine Community Organizer's Society (PhilCOS)

Asia Caucus • Ateneo de Zamboanga Peace Institute • Asia-Pacific Peace Research Association (APPRA) • Balay Mindanao Foundation, Inc. (BMFI) • Center for Peace Education, Miriam College • Coalition for Bicol Development (CBD) • Coalition for Peace • CfP- Socsargen • Cordillera Network of NGOs & Pos (CORDNET) • Demokratiko Sosyalistang Kabataan ng Pilipinas (DSKP-SDC) • Federation of Free Workers • Geneva Call-Asia • Iloilo CODE • Kapulungan ng mga Sandiġan ng Pilipinas (KASAPI) • Kilusang 12.30 • Korean NGOs Asian Center • Leyte CODE • Leaders and Organizers of Community Organizations in Asia (LOCOA) • Mediators' Network for Sustainable Peace • Mindanao Allliance of Self Help Societies Southern Philippines Educational Coop. Center (MASS-SPECC) • Mindanao Coalition of Development NGOs (MINCODE) • Muslim Volunteers for Good Governance (MVGG) • National Council of Social Development (NCSD) • Paghiliusa sa Paghidaet Negros • Paglilingkod Batas Pangkapatiran Foundation (PBPF) • Pandayan para sa Sosyalistang Pilipinas • Peace Advocates-Zamboanga • People's Movement for Democratic Governance • (PMDG) • Philippine Campaign to Ban Landmines • Philippine Partnership for the Development of Human Resources in Rural Areas (PhilDHRRA) • PILIPINA • Reconciliation for Progress Movement (RPM)• Sandata ng Bayan Laban sa Kahirapan (Bagong Sandata) • Social Democratic Caucus (SDC) • Tambuli ng Maralitang Sambayanan (TAMASA) • Visayas Network of Development NGOs (VISNET) • VISNET Region 7 • Women's Action Network for Development (WAND)

ADVT.

RP environmentalist wins $125,000 Goldman prize

From page A1

protection," said Richard Goldman, who founded the award with his late wife, Rhoda Haas Goldman, in 1990.

"In the current political climate, it is more important than ever to recognize people who are working to protect the health of their water, air and community resources. We are honored to recognize work that exemplifies how much can be accomplished when ordinary people take extraordinary action to protect the health of our planet," he said.

'Very pleasant'

He said the award was a "very pleasant and encouraging surprise."

Hernandez's campaign against waste incinerators helped make history in 1999 when the Philippines became the first country in the world to ban waste incineration nationwide.

Waste incineration is a highly polluting practice that produces hormone-disrupting dioxins and releases heavy metals like lead, arsenic and cadmium into the air.

"We have to change from material destruction, incineration, to material recovery—recycling, composting," said Hernandez. "It is good for the economy, for the environment and for communities."

Other winners

Two grandmothers, one from the coal fields of West Virginia and the other from the Australian outback, who saw their families devastated by environmental damage were among the other recipients of the environmental awards.

Julia Bonds, 51, was this year's winner from North America. A coal miner's daughter and the director of Coal River Mountain Watch, Bonds has campaigned to stop mountaintop removal mining in Appalachia, a practice that involves blasting off the tops of mountains so machines can mine thin seams of coal.

Eileen Wani Wingfield and Eileen Kampakuta Brown, both Australian aborigines, won for leading a campaign to block construction of a nuclear waste dump in their South Australian desert homeland.

The African winner was Odigha Odigha, 46, who helped limit industrial logging in the Cross River State in southeastern Nigeria. These are the country's last remaining rain forests and home to 2,400 native forest communities.

Peru's Maria Elena Foronda Farro, a 44-year-old sociologist, won for her efforts in forging partnerships between community groups, fish meal producers and the government to institute sustainable practices for fish meal production.

Europe's winner was Pedro Arrojo-Agudo of Spain, an economics professor who was the principal architect behind the campaign to stop his country's National Hydrological Plan from damming and rerouting the country's last remaining free-flowing rivers.

Toxic technologies

Hernandez became active in the incineration issue while working as Asia Toxics Campaigner for Greenpeace International. Hernandez had realized that it was not only hazardous waste, but also toxic technologies that multinational companies were exporting to the region.

With waste incineration being touted as the solution to Manila's waste problems, Hernandez and his allies jumped into action. They informed local communities that waste incinerators were the largest sources of hormone-disrupting dioxins.

In 1998, Hernandez helped organize mass protests, testified before congressional hearings and waged a national public education campaign in the media to draw attention to the devastating health impacts of waste incineration and to highlight proven alternatives to burning waste.

His perseverance paid off when the incineration ban was approved in the Clean Air Act of 1999.

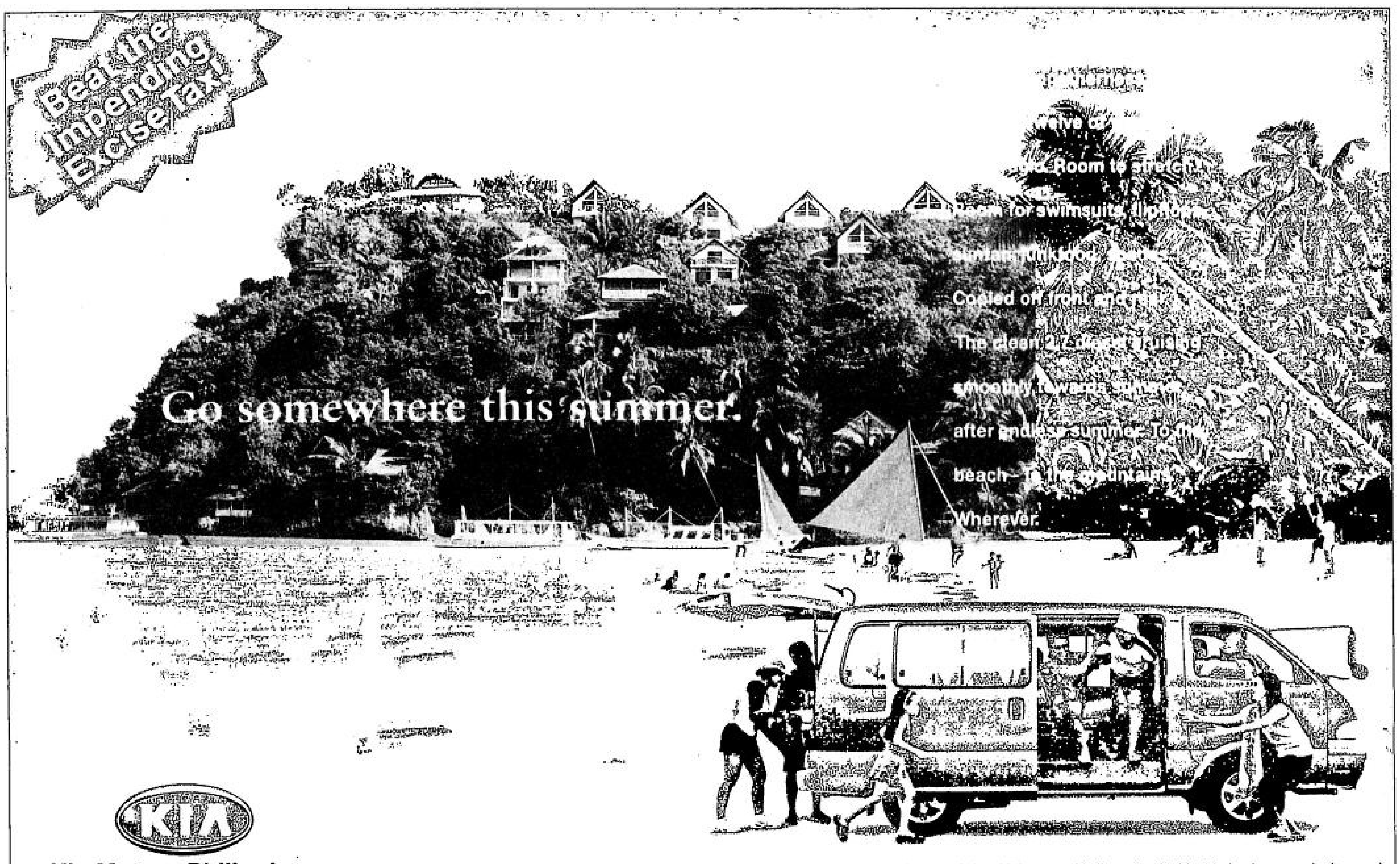
Eco Waste Coalition

Hernandez moved swiftly to create the Eco Waste Coalition to urge the Philippine government to adopt legislation that would manage and allocate resources to more sustainable methods of waste disposal. The Ecological Solid Waste Management Act was adopted in January 2001.

Hernandez has not limited his activism to his motherland. He was a rousing presence at the recent World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg where, together with local allies and the Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives, he held a "zero waste" forum that drew more than 100 environmental leaders from 20 nations.

That same year, he was instrumental in organizing the first "Global Day of Action Against Waste Incineration" which involved more than 125 organizations from 54 countries.

"Our fight against incineration, landfills and polluting technologies is actually a struggle against the negative and destructive forces of overconsumption and dirty industrial development," said Hernandez. "It is essentially a struggle to shift the dominant paradigm to one which is truly respectful of life and the rights of future generations." *With reports from Reuters, AP*



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War drawing to a close; Saddam town falls

From page A1

paramilitaries and irregular forces."

But Lockwood made sure to make the military significance of Tikrit clear. Once Saddam's hometown falls, the war in Iraq will likely have finished, he told Agence France Presse yesterday.

"We have very good hopes, we are almost there," he said.

"As far as I am aware, Tikrit is the only pocket of resistance . . . and so there is a very good chance that once Tikrit has fallen the war will have finished," he said.

Arab fighters

Al-Jazeera's Sharif said Gen. John Kelly, commander of the Marines in Tikrit, told him the Marines had encountered pockets of resistance in the town and were battling Arab fighters who had volunteered to defend Iraq in the war.

"Gen. John Kelly told us that some Arab mujahideen snipers were shooting from civilian areas and were positioned between the houses," Sharif said. "The regular army and fighters in civilian clothes had fought in Tikrit."

Al-Jazeera TV showed some Marines sitting on pavements in empty streets, others searching a car.

"They have also imposed a curfew. The town is completely closed, nobody is on the streets except for the Marines. People leaving their homes were searched thoroughly because the Marines are afraid of suicide attacks," Sharif said.

US forces had believed as many as 2,500 Iraqi Republican Guards and Saddam Fedayeen militia were in Tikrit and were prepared to defend it.

Matthew Fisher of Canada's National Post, also with US forces in Tikrit, told CNN sporadic gunfights were still going on but Marines were meeting little resistance.

"They have control of quite a lot of it (Tikrit), they hope to establish over the rest very soon . . . They are in force out in the streets, there is no doubt about that," Fisher said. "They have been surprised (resistance) is quite low level. Maybe a lot of the fighters have given up or disappeared."

A sergeant said three US Marine reconnaissance battalions entered before dawn, meeting no resistance. Sgt. Robert Chute said: "My feeling is this means the end of the war.

"We didn't encounter any resistance in the city, but only on the outskirts last night. We had bad ambushes there."

Seven POWs

South of Tikrit, US Marines kicked down the door of a house in Samarra and rescued seven American prisoners of war. They were flown to Kuwait after three weeks in Iraqi hands. During the plane ride, they spoke of being hustled from place to place during their captivity, and of their fears of death.

"We were a hot potato," said US Army Specialist Shoshana Johnson. "It was getting to the point where I believed they were going to kill us."

THE LANDSCAPE of Kirkuk in northern Iraq, which is now under the control of the US-led coalition, is dotted with bombed out buildings such as the office of the Iraqi government security service. AP

Fil-American Joseph Hudson was among the rescued POWs.

While hailing the rescue, US President George W. Bush and Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld warned Syria not to grant refuge to fleeing Iraqi leaders.

Saddam's fate remains unclear. Some believe he may be in Tikrit or has fled abroad, others that he might be dead.

US Central Command chief Gen. Tommy Franks, who is overall commander of the war in Iraq, said American forces had DNA genetic material which could be used to identify Saddam and check whether attempts to kill him had succeeded or not.

"He's either dead or he's running a lot," Franks told CNN. "He'll simply be alive until I can confirm he's dead."

Baghdad order

In Baghdad, US troops tried to maintain some order in the chaotic city, wracked by days of looting since Saddam's 24-year grip on the Iraqi capital collapsed last week.

But there were still sporadic bursts of fighting. Marines exchanged fire with unidentified targets around the Palestine Hotel in central Baghdad overnight, AFP journalists in the capital reported.

The Marines occasionally opened fire with automatic weapons and fired flares around the hotel, which houses most foreign media in the Iraqi capital.

A US military spokesperson said US troops would start joint patrols with Iraqi security forces. US officials have begun trying to rebuild the Iraqi police force as well as drawing people back to key sectors such as the electricity department.

More than 2,000 Iraqi policemen reported back for work yesterday.

Police Lt. Col. Haitham al-Ani said the US troops and the Iraqis would be patrolling in separate cars. The police station also was to reopen, a major general with the police said.

Stores were still shut but buses were running, packed with passengers Monday, and residents began collecting and burning the garbage piled up on the city streets. A team of 32 US Army engineers had arrived a day earlier to help restore electricity. Water and power supplies remain down while widespread lawlessness still stalks many areas.

A few hundred Iraqis demonstrated outside the Palestine Hotel to complain about the lack of security in the city. Dozens chanted: "Islamic state! Islamic state! Not American, not American!"

US-led forces continued their hunt for senior figures from Saddam's regime. US officials said Sunday that Watban Ibrahim al-Tikriti, an adviser and half brother of Saddam, was recently picked up en route to Syria. Saddam's science adviser surrendered Saturday.

Other senior Iraqi leaders were believed to have escaped into Syria to the west, Rumsfeld said. He said he hoped Syria would not become a "haven for war criminals or terrorists." *Reuters, AFP, AP*

GMA jumps gun, names new envoy to Baghdad

From page A1

Nations play an important role in the rehabilitation of Iraq, but the Bush administration has prepared a provisional authority under retired American general Jay Garner.

Ms Macapagal also announced the composition of the "Humanitarian Assistance Task Force" that would formulate the Philippine assistance plan for Iraq.

She appointed Foreign Secretary Blas Ople and Defense Secretary Angelo Reyes, co-chairs of the task force, and special envoy Roy Cimatu, head of the Middle East Preparedness Team, as its executive director.

Members include Interior Secretary Jose Lina, Health Secretary Manuel Dayrit, Social Welfare Secretary Corazon Soliman, former Armed Forces Chief of Staff Gen. Dionisio Santiago, PNP Director General Hermogenes Ebdane Jr., Ambassador to Kuwait Bayani Mangibin, Ibazeta and the executive director of the Office of Muslim Affairs, an attached agency of the Office of the President.

"The task force shall also conclude arrangements with host governments, whereby the Philippine contingent in Iraq is not put at personal risk from the application of local laws when deployed abroad upon orders," she said.

Large share

Angara said the country was in a position to demand its share of the victory dividends.

"President (Macapagal) Arroyo should make a direct contact with President George W. Bush and make it clear that we deserve a large share of victory dividends," Angara said. "We took the risk, so we are on moral high ground to insist on collecting the victory dividends."

He said the Philippines had to endure the ire of Arab countries, where more than a million overseas Filipino workers are deployed.

Angara said the President should send a special envoy to Washington to negotiate for substantial Philippine participation in Iraqi reconstruction and rehabilitation.

The special envoy, he stressed, should be a respected businessman who commands the trust and confidence of the international and domestic business communities," he said.

"We should have a large share in postwar Iraq reconstruction. We should not be limited to sending a handful of military peacekeeping and security forces, like we did in Kosovo and East Timor," he said.

Angara said the Philippines could send to Iraq tens of thousands of world-class Filipino engineers, technicians, IT experts, construction and health workers.

"We have sent Filipino workers to Iraq before. There were 45,000 Filipinos in Iraq before the Gulf War in 1991. We can send more world-class Filipino engineers, dock workers, doctors and nurses," he said.

Aside from the humanitarian task force, the President also announced the formation of the "Public-Private Sector Task Force."

The task force will coordinate and support the country's participation in the "massive long-term efforts to rebuild the shattered infrastructure and institutions of Iraq and help its people on their way to unlocking their country's great potential" she said.

Atlas chair

Ibazeta, 60, is currently chair of Atlas Mining and Development Corp. and a consultant to the chair of A. Soriano Corp. He was Anscor president in the 1980s.

He is a director of AB Capital Investment Corp., PET Plans and International Container Terminal Services Inc.

He holds a bachelor of science degree from the Ateneo de Manila, a masters degree in business administration from the University of San Francisco and another masters degree in banking and finance from New York University.

In the 1970s, he worked for various investment management firms in New York.

The INQUIRER called Ibazeta at his Anscor office yesterday but he had not reported for work.

A Cabinet source who declined to be identified said Ibazeta possessed the diplomatic skills and business savvy that Malacañang needs to take advantage of the opportunities in the rehabilitation of Iraq.

Next week

In her speech before the PNP Academy, the President also announced that police and humanitarian workers would start deploying in Iraq next week.

"As part of our work with the international community and our global engagement, next week we shall begin sending a humanitarian and peacekeeping contingent to Iraq," she said.

"Many of its members will come from the PNP," she said.

The Macapagal administration, which offered political and moral backing for the US-led invasion of Iraq, has pledged to send a 500-member humanitarian team to that country, including military and police peacekeepers, medical workers and engineers.

"The end of the war in Iraq will come as a great relief. We mourn the loss of lives and the destruction of property," Ms Macapagal said.

"Those of us who supported the cause have an even greater stake in ensuring that the losses and sacrifices were not in vain. Now that the Iraqi people have been freed from the yoke of tyranny and oppression, the world must come together and help them enjoy the fruits of freedom and democracy."

Ople backed a leading postwar role for the United States and its allies in rebuilding Iraq.

"I expect that for the near and immediate term, the United States and its allies on the ground would have an important and direct role," Ople said in a statement amid an international debate on the role of the United Nations in post-war Iraq.

"But I believe that once we have addressed the immediate needs, the United Nations should have and will have an increased role. I also believe that the Iraqi people, through the interim Iraqi government, should have a strong say in all this," he added.

The President dismissed criticism that jobs for Filipinos in Iraq—which Ople estimated at 100,000—were a payoff for supporting the war. "Our support for democracy is based on principle. It is not based on anticipation of any material reward," she said. *With reports from Gil Cabacungan; AFP, AP*

WarBriefs

Najaf siege ends

IN THE HOLY city of Najaf, tribal leaders ended a siege by armed men of the home of Shi'ite leader Grand Ayatollah Ali Sistani and took control of the central city.

"The siege has ended," said Mohammad Baqir Mohri, an aide to Sistani whose home in the city, 160 km south of Baghdad, had been surrounded on Saturday by groups demanding he leave Iraq within 48 hours. "The tribal leaders are now in control of the city," the aide told Reuters in Kuwait.

The standoff highlighted the strife at the heart of Iraq's majority and indicated how difficult it could be to cement national unity after Saddam's fall.

Shi'ites make up 60 percent of Iraq's population of around 26 million and were persecuted for decades by Saddam's secular Sunni-dominated Baath Party. *Reuters*

Mosul calm

IN THE MAIN northern cities of Mosul and Kirkuk, calm had returned Sunday after two days of looting and intercommunal fighting, with US troops reassuring Turkey by replacing Kurdish fighters in the oil-rich cities.

Mosul police were back on the streets while vigilantes were also trying to restore order in the city of 1.5 million, where as many as 20 people were killed and 200 wounded in two days of fighting between Arabs and Kurds.

Kurdish residents and members of the Free Iraqi Forces—part of the US-backed Iraqi National Congress (INC) umbrella opposition group—were sharing the task of protecting the city's infrastructure, US military sources said. *AFP*

Kirkuk committee meeting

IN THE NORTHERN city of Kirkuk, American military personnel met with the city's tribesmen, political and religious leaders Sunday to discuss restoring law and order, as well as water, electricity and gas cut off since Saddam's forces retreated last week.

They agreed to form an 18-member committee to provide security and restore essential services, said Mohamed Amin Abdulhailim Chamchali, head of the United Religious Scholars.

He said the committee—to be made up of six Kurds, six Arabs and six Turkomans—would meet twice a week starting Thursday.

Hundreds of men waited outside hoping to air their grievances.

"The Americans only came here to protect the oil installations. They've done nothing else," said Najdat Saleh. "They have done nothing to establish law and order in the city." *AP*

Fil-Am tells friends 'Ako Pilipino,' says mom

From page A1

from her sister in Okinawa on Sunday. Hours later, an Army representative visited to confirm that her son was safe.

"I know he's OK," she said with a wide grin, sitting in front of her television Sunday. "I know he is in good shape. He is in American hands, so I'm not worried."

She stayed glued to the television set to see the first pictures of her son after his rescue—a dramatic change from the images she had seen three weeks ago when a Filipino satellite television station showed footage from Iraqi television of her captured son.

Of the POWs found Sunday, two were crewmen of an Apache helicopter who were captured by Iraqis on March 24 and five were members of the 507th.

Freedom brought hugs, applause and slaps on the back from smiling Marines before the seven were flown to Kuwait for a medical checkup and debriefing.

Kicked, beaten

In interviews with reporters from The Washington Post and The Miami Herald, some of the freed prisoners said they had been kicked and beaten after they were captured.

They said their jailers had been cruel at the start, taunting them, but backed off as time passed. They were interrogated, but did not complain of torture.

Joseph spoke to his wife, Natalie, over the phone on Sunday afternoon. Natalie and their 5-year-old daughter Cameron were in El Paso, Texas.

Aniceta spoke with her daughter-in-law soon after. She said Natalie reported that Joseph had been wounded but that he was well. He had been shot twice in the ribs and once in the buttocks.

Joseph's wife and brother, 19-year-old Anthony Hudson, were scheduled to be briefed at Fort Bliss on Monday where the Army is going to arrange for them to travel and meet Joseph.

Anthony, who heard about his brother's rescue as he was finishing his overnight shift, said he didn't have anything planned to say to his big brother when he sees him.

"I'm just going to give him a big hug," he said.

He described the three weeks since his brother's capture as hell.

Support from family, friends and perfect strangers had poured into the Hudson home. Among the stacks of letters and cards was a note from the mother of an 18-year-old British airman in England who was praying for Joseph's safe return.

News of Hudson's release spread quickly through Alamogordo—from Palm Sunday homilies to brunch conversation at local eateries.

Waiting

Friends of Aniceta said the waiting for news about Joseph had begun to take its toll on the petite woman known for both her spunk and kindness.

Nurses Nancy Friend and Tanya Webster, who supervises Aniceta's dialysis three times a week because of kidney failure, described their person as a lively and caring patient who cooks them lunch after every dialysis session. But the lunches stopped this week.

"She hasn't been sleeping," Webster said, as she watched Aniceta give one of her many television interviews on Sunday. "She's been real teary-eyed."

But there were no tears late Sunday—only dark-circled eyes and a weary smile as a parade of reporters made their way to the Hudson home.

"It's like a McDonald's drive through," Aniceta Hudson joked. "Who's next?"

In a two-hour stretch Sunday, she made an appearance on CNN, did a photo shoot for People Magazine, had a visit from a "Good Morning America" producer and did an interview with a Las Cruces television station.

By day's end, she still looked wistfully toward the telephone. All she wanted, she said, was to hear her son's voice.

Joseph enlisted last September and left for his duty assignment on Feb. 22.

The son of a retired Air Force man and grandson of an Army soldier, Joseph was born at an Air Force base in Georgia and had visited the Philippines as a child.

Aside from English, he speaks Tagalog and the Visayan dialect, which he picked up from his Filipino grandmother, a native of Negros Occidental. *AP*

Bishops bless 'pabasa' . . .

From page A1

nando Coronel admitted that the practice of reciting the stories in the Bible in monotone has undergone some changes.

"Some people are now doing it through rap music. These are children with their way of expressing the *pabasa*," Hernando told Church reporters.

He said this did not disrespect the Sacred Scriptures as long as young people did it in a decent way.

Even though this religious tradition marked by what he called a "prescribed tone" has been handed down through generations, Coronel said the youth are nonetheless entitled to "celebrating the mysteries of our Lord in their own way."

But Coronel said the Church continued to disapprove of the practice of some Catholics to have themselves nailed to a cross on Good Friday.

"They should confess, go to mass, meditate on the passion of (Jesus Christ) and the cross, but they should take care of their bodies," he said.

"Your body is the temple of your soul. Are you going to hurt your body?" he asked.

He said if the idea of the penitents was to imitate Christ, there were other ways of doing so.

"My advice to them is to imitate Christ by recalling their sins and being sorry for them. We should change our ways," he said.

A paper prepared by the Archdiocesan Liturgical Commission in Manila called attention to the festive nature of Holy Week in the country.

"Exuberance is a good word to describe it. While the rest of the Christian world wears a long face, Filipino Catholics are jubilant amidst the tearful images of saints drawn around town streets. Catholic life never seems to be as vibrant as during Holy Week," the paper said.

MJ last home game vs Knicks

WASHINGTON—Although he couldn't take the Washington Wizards to the playoffs in two years as a player, Michael Jordan brought sellouts and big profits to a listless franchise.

Jordan plays his last home game Monday (Tuesday in Manila) when the Wizards host the New York Knicks, and owner Abe Pollin could be forgiven for taking a long gaze during the game at a sight unimaginable pre-MJ: an 84th consecutive sellout.

SOLAR Sports will telecast the final NBA game of Michael Jordan this Thursday (April 17) when the Washington Wizards face the Philadelphia 76ers at 7 p.m. on IBC-13.

"Nobody talked about the Washington Wizards," coach Doug Collins said. "They were a 19-win organization. And all of a sudden, everybody's watching the Wizards on TV. We're the No. 1 road team in the NBA. Friday night in Miami was the biggest crowd in the history of the American Airlines Arena. Cleveland had two sellouts–they were us. That's the way it's been. That's what Michael brings."

The Wizards were barely on anyone's radar before Jordan came to town. They haven't won a playoff game since 1988 and haven't won a playoff series since 1982. *AP*

YESTERDAY'S RESULTS

MILWAUKEE 107, Indiana 98; Minnesota 119, Chicago 95; Portland 101, LA Lakers 99; Boston 94, Miami 86; New Orleans 94, Philadelphia 89; Detroit 110, Memphis 107 (OT); Phoenix 92, San Antonio 85

UPSET WIN AFP

Justine Henin-Hardenne of Belgium whoops it up after beating world No. 1 Serena Williams, 6-4, 6-4, in the final of the Family Circle Cup in Charleston, S.C. on Sunday. The loss ended Williams' 21-match winning streak.

RP tracksters face acid test

By Marc Anthony Reyes

THE COUNTRY'S best bets for international competitions see action when the Milo National Open invitational track and field championships kick off May 1-4 at the Rizal Memorial Sports Complex.

GO TENG KOK

Led by Southeast Asian Games double-gold medalist Eduardo Buenavista, the national team clash with up and coming athletes as well as rivals from Malaysia and Thailand in the annual meet supported by the Philippine Sports Commission.

Philippine Amateur Track and Field Association president Go Teng Kok said the Philippines' chances in the Vietnam SEA Games in December will be weighed by the athletes' level of performance.

"Our strongest athletes are here to face the challenge of young aspiring national athletes as well as the best tracksters from our two strongest SEAG rivals," Go told the INQUIRER.

The Philippine athletics team won nine gold medals during the 2001 Kuala Lumpur SEAG to become the most productive among 36 other national sports associations. What made the feat remarkable was that it was the first multi-event meet in the post Lydia de Vega-Elma Muros era.

Go said the competitions are getting tougher each year and though the national tracksters are continuously improving, he admitted that the country is facing an uphill battle for the SEAG this year in Vietnam.

'Balikatan' tilt gets under way May 6

ANOTHER blockbuster derby is slated at Roligon Mega Cockpit as 104 participants have already signed up to join the "Balikatan 5-Cock Derby" at Roligon Mega Cockpit on May 6, 8 and 10 (Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday). Sponsors are Thunderbird Platinum, Casino Filipino and Ninja Gamefowl Feeds.

"We are expecting 200-plus entries, so please make your reservation of cockhouses early. In terms of prizes at stake, this event is truly irrisistible," said derby host Rolly Ligon.

For more details, call 833-2275 and 833-1638.

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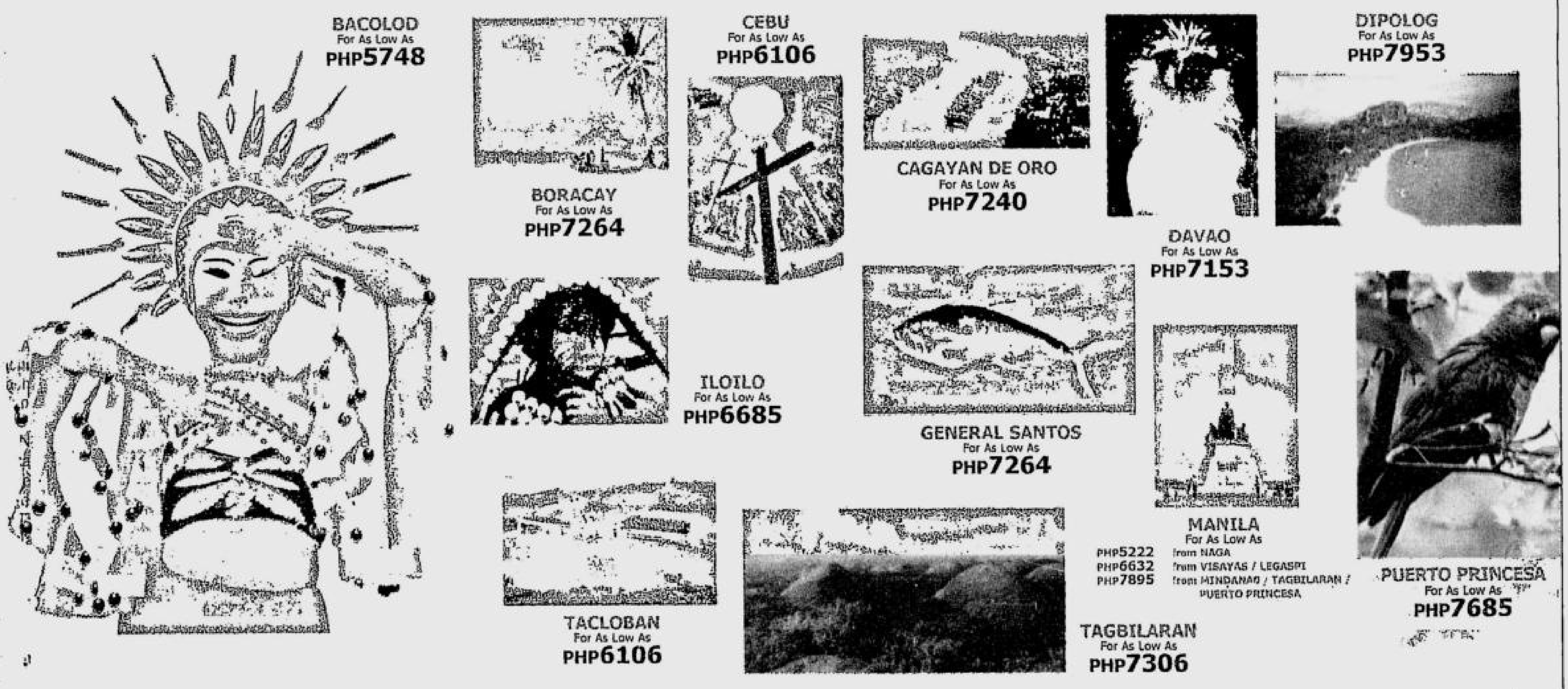
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SPORTSWATCH

Yap out of ICTSI

SWINGMAN James Yap became the second PBL player from the University of the East to sit out this conference due to conflict of schedule. ICTSI-Archers, Yap's PBL team, decided to sit out the 6-foot-3 swingman for the rest of the ongoing Sunkist PBL Unity Cup. Yap will join the Red Warriors in their summer schedule which includes the National Prisaa, International Friendship cage tourney in Guam and the Basketball Exchange program in Beijing. Meanwhile, ICTSI (2-3) resumes its campaign when it seeks a repeat over John O (4-1) at 5 p. m. in the mainer of a triple bill today at the Makati Coliseum before the league takes its Lenten break. Blu Star Detergent (3-2) meets Montaña (2-3) at 3 p.m., while Nutri-licious (2-3) tackles Welcoat (1-4) at 1 p.m. *Dennis U. Eroa*

Cebu triathlon slated

BANTAYAN Island in Cebu comes alive when it hosts the Osaka Iridology Triathlon on April 17. Reigning National Triathlon Trials (NTT) champion Joel Salvador will lead the huge field in this event that will use the Olympic distance of 1.5-km swim, 40-km bike and 10-km run. Featured divisions are the male and female open categories where the top three winners will receive P5,000, P4,000 and P3,000, respectively. Other strong contenders in this category are Ian Rusiana of Dumaguete and Japanese Hiroshi Takei. The Island Sports Holiday, which is being held annually in different venues in Cebu, is now on its third edition. Osaka president Jonathan Guardo, who is also the chair of the Cebu City Sports Commission, said his active involvement in physically demanding triathlon event mirrors his company's vision of promoting an active and healthy lifestyle. Guardo spearheaded the holding of the 2003 NTT held at the South Reclamation Area in Cebu City where about 200 triathletes saw action. For inquiries, visit www.cebuweek.com

SPORTSTV

Compiled by Lorenzo Manguiat

BASKETBALL: NBA - Nets vs Hornets, 7:30 am (r - 8 p.m.), Greatest Games, 11 a.m., Solar Sports

World Pro Basketball Challenge, 10 a.m. (r), ESPN

NBA Anthology - 1988 LA Lakers: Back To Back, 7:30 p.m., ESPN

BOXING: WBC Flyweight Championship - Tunacao (Phils) vs Pongsaklek (Thai), 2 p.m., Solar Sports

Friday Night Fights, 9:30 p.m. (r), ESPN

PSC, DepEd back Lanao Palaro

By Marc Anthony reyes

THE PHILIPPINE Sports Commission and the Department of Education have joined hands to ensure the success of the 2003 Palarong Pambansa on May 4-11 at the Mindanao Civic Center in Tubod, Lanao del Norte.

The committees which will run the Games are all set up, while procedures that will guarantee the smooth operations are in place, according to PSC chair Eric Buhain.

Education Secretary Edilberto De Jesus is also expected to issue a directive to DepEd regional heads to use their machinery for the training and participation of the student-athletes in the country's biggest grassroots development project.

"It's all systems go," said Buhain. "We are expecting a hassle-free Palaro this year because all agencies involved are doing their share for its success."

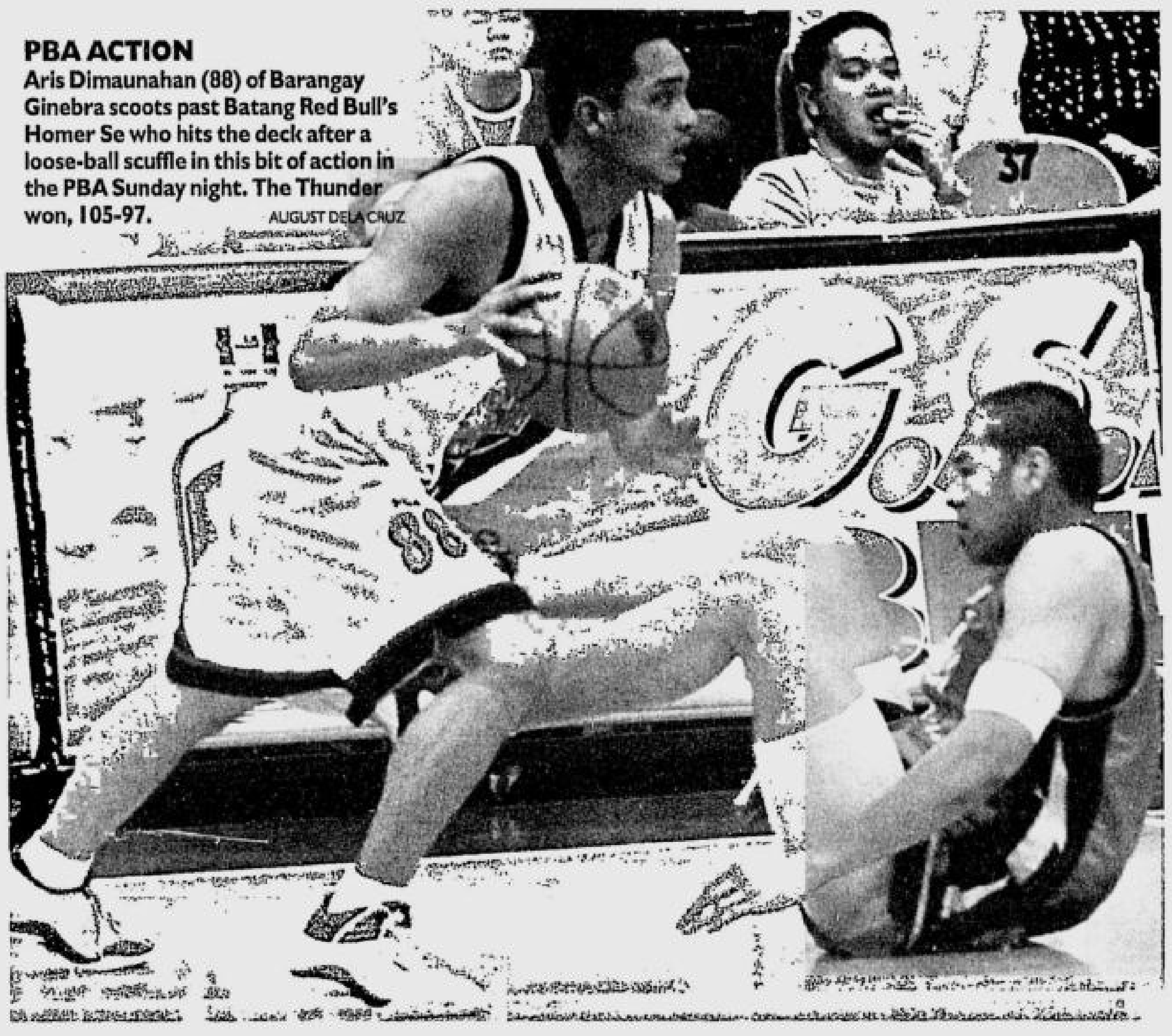
At least 5,000 student-athletes from 14 regions have already confirmed participation in the Games hosted by the provincial government of Lanao del Norte, led by Gov. Imelda Quibranza-Dimaporo.

"Secretary De Jesus is 100 percent behind the Palaro's success. Everything is in place, including security measures committed by the Philippine National Police, Armed Forces, Lanao del Norte citizenry and even the MILF to ensure the success of the Palaro," said Buhain.

The PSC chief said they are waiting for the entries from the National Capital Region and Region 7 (Western Visayas), which are the only delegation which have yet to submit their rosters.

Buhain admitted that: "Some parents are hesitant in sending their kids to the Palaro. And of course, we respect their stand, but these parents are only speaking for their own kids and not on behalf of their respective delegations."

Recently, Governor Dimaporo has unveiled the official Palaro mascot named Sari the Champ, a mythical rooster clutching a bounty from the sea. The launching was made during the Lanao del Norte day in the Pasundayag Northern Mindanao, which was part of the Visit Philippines 2003 in Intramuros.



PBA ACTION

Aris Dimaunahan (88) of Barangay Ginebra scoots past Batang Red Bull's Homer Se who hits the deck after a loose-ball scuffle in this bit of action in the PBA Sunday night. The Thunder won, 105-97. AUGUST DELA CRUZ

Tanduay joins Tour

By June Navarro

MORE than a year after pulling its resources out of the Philippine Basketball Association, the Tanduay Rhummasters will again see action, not on the hardcourt, but on the road under the sweltering heat of the sun when the Tour Pilipinas 2003 kicks off on April 24.

The Rhummasters lead a cast of Tour Pilipinas team supporters, including five other big companies in the country–PLDT NDD, Samsung, Intel, Gilbeys Island Punch and Bowling Gold–which have agreed to sponsor teams in the 15-stage cycling adventure.

With the support of these companies, Tour organizers have united the private sector and the government under one major sporting endeavor.

On the government side of the race that starts on April 24 and ends on May 11 are the Drug Busters and Patrol 117 of the Department of Interior and Local Government, the Ecosavers of the Environment and Natural Resources, Postmen of Transportation and Communications and Vat Riders of the Bureau of Internal Revenue.

The government teams will be carrying names that stress on their advocacy programs.

These teams are set to join the 100-vehicle Tour caravan, which consists of close to 500 officials and personnel, who will trek down south to Legaspi City on April 24, the kick-off leg of the 18-day Tour.

Up for grabs in the race is the top team prize of P1 million and the individual classification purse of P200,000. Prizes total over P3 million.

Besides the race, which has been an annual summer sports tradition for half a century, the Tour will also be a mobile fiesta with nightly shows scheduled in all stops in Legaspi City, Naga, Daet, Lucena, Tagaytay, Marikina City, Olongapo, Dagupan, Vigan, Laoag, San Fernando, Baguio and the Rizal Park in Manila.

Weird win by Weir

From page A22

"It was a difficult day for me then, but at the same time, I did observe how Tiger managed his victory there," Weir said. "The tough putts, the ones around 8 feet that you need to win, I missed almost every one at Medinah."

At Augusta, Weir didn't miss any down the stretch. He saved his two biggest putts for the final two holes of regulation, both to save par.

Weir came up short on a birdie attempt for an outright victory at the 18th, then sank a 2 meter (6-foot) putt to keep going. He looked calm, but his emotions were churning.

Mattiace brought drama back to the final nine holes with phenomenal shots that took him to the edge of a stunning victory with a 65 — one short of the Augusta record for a final round.

Mattiace could have won with a par on 18, but he pushed his tee shot onto some wood chips along the right side of the fairway. Forced to pitch out from the trees, he wound up with bogey.

Final scores:

Mike Weir won on first playoff hole.

281--L. Mattiace 73-74-69-65, M. Weir 70-68-75-68

283--P. Mickelson 73-70-72-68

284--J. Furyk 73-72-71-68

286--J. Maggert 72-73-66-75

287--E. Els 79-66-72-70, V. Singh 73-71-70-73

288--J. Byrd 74-71-71-72, S. Verplank 76-73-70-69, M. O'Meara 76-71-70-71, J. M. Olazabal 73-71-71-73, D. Toms 71-73-70-74

289--R. Goosen 73-74-72-70, T. Clark 72-75-71-71

290--R. Beem 74-72-71-73, A. Cabrera 76-71-71-72, D. Love III 77-71-71-71, P. Lawrie 72-72-73-73, KJ Choi 76-69-72-73, T. Woods 76-73-66-75 *AP*

'The Trailer'

From page A22

brown, and Weir, in an all-black outfit, had hit perfect drives. Because Weir outdrove Mattiace by a yard, Mattiace approached first. The result–er, mistake–cost Mattiace the most prestigious crown in golf; he missed the green from 188 yards, the ball plowing under a clutch of trees. When Weir planted his 6-iron, 187-yard shot to the green, the drama was over.

With his victory, Weir became the first Canadian to win the Masters and the first lefty to pocket a major since Bob Charles did the trick in 1963 in the British Open.

But if Mattiace was this year's Masters' heartbreak kid and Woods the hero who never was, Maggert was Mr. Sob Story. Maggert, who was alone at fifth 6 shots behind Weir, could have won it had he not dropped 8 strokes on two holes. Maggert made 8 on the par-3 12th on two trips to the pond after a 6 on another par-3 going out en route to a 75.

Didn't I tell you golf is a game of mistakes? The one committing the fewest mistakes always wins it.

***

And now the Mistake of the Year. RPN 9 suddenly cut the live coverage of the Masters yesterday. The mother of all TV crimes happened when Mattiace was setting up to extricate himself out of the woods during the playoff. What a boo-boo. Monumental.

Cerge Remonde, RPN 9's chair and CEO, owes the public an apology.

Superal fires 67 at Eagle Ridge

HIS recent achievements dwarfed by the conquests abroad of the smaller ones, Wolen Juan Superal played a superb round that got him all the attention in yesterday's opening round of the Samsung Jungolf Tour at the Faldo course of the Eagle Ridge Golf and Country Club.

Superal sparkled with the Tour's best score so far, a five-under-par 67, over a course that is certainly not easy under the prevailing conditions and threatened to pull off another runaway win after winning his first two stints.

The son of a teaching pro reached the green with his daring 220-yard drive on the par-4 No. 1 then two-putted for the first of six birdies he gunned down on a hot and sticky day. He only had one bogey which came on the 15th. *Jong Arcano*

Coca-Cola
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CAGE CLINIC FOR KIDS

Over a hundred eager youngsters, aged 6 to 16, turned up on the first day of the Coca-Cola Champions Basketball Clinic at the De La Salle Santiago Zobel School in Ayala Alabang recently. The clinic is organized under Coca-Cola's recently launched campaign called "Healthy and Active Lifestyle in partnership with the Department of Health. PBA coach Chot Reyes and his US Basketball Academy-certified coaching staff supervised the clinic. Shown with the participants during the kick-off rites are guest speaker Dr. Antonio Golez, executive assistant to Health Secretary Manuel Dayrit, Reyes and his coaching staff.

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SPORTS

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Assistant Editor **Edwin M. Villanueva**

Indians end Royals' streak

CLEVELAND—The Kansas City Royals lost for the first time this season, ending baseball's best start in 13 years, as Ricardo Rodriguez pitched the Cleveland Indians to a 6-1 win. The Royals were the first club to start 9-0 since the 1990 Cincinnati Reds. Rodriguez kept Kansas City from becoming the eighth team in history to open 10-0, and first since the 1987 Milwaukee Brewers started 13-0. *AP*

Weird win by Weir

Left-handed Canadian downs Mattiace in playoff; Woods Masters bid falls short

WEIR (right) receives his green jacket from Woods after Weir defeated Mattiace in a one hole playoff to win the 2003 Masters Championship. REUTERS

By Paul Newberry
AP Golf Writer

AUGUSTA, Georgia—The Masters' green jacket–which had never been won by a left-hander or a Canadian–was claimed by a left-handed Canadian.

Canada's Mike Weir won the first Augusta playoff since 1990, taking the green jacket from Tiger Woods after Len Mattiace self-destructed on the extra hole.

"It's been a little bit odd, obviously," Weir said. "There were a bunch of things going on outside the gates, and with the weather and everything, it's been a little bit of a hectic week. But I didn't pay much attention to that. I was here to play a golf tournament."

That he did, getting through a Sunday at Augusta without making a bogey until the very end. By then, it didn't matter–Weir tapped in to win on the first playoff hole while Mattiace was taking a double-bogey.

"Unbelievable," Weir said. "It's something I've dreamed of, something I worked very hard at. I'm having a hard time putting it into words because words won't do it justice."

From weird to Weir, there's never been a Masters like this.

It started with the rain, which washed out the first round for the first time in 64 years and left muddy Augusta National smelling like a barnyard.

Then came Martha Burk, whose protest against Augusta's all-male membership featured a puppet show, an Elvis impersonator and a Klansman without a hood.

And now the green jacket that Woods had hoped to slip on for a record third straight year is going north of the border.

Tiger put himself in position to make history by shooting a 66 in the third round. But Woods was out of contention before making the turn on Sunday, his slide beginning with a double-bogey at No. 3.

"It was just one of those weeks where I couldn't get anything going for an extended time," Woods said.

The same could be said of Weir for much of his career.

Like most Canadians, he grew up playing hockey. When the other kids shot past him in height–Weir is 1.78 meters (5-foot-10)–he turned his attention to golf.

At age 13, Weir sent a letter to Jack Nicklaus asking whether he should try to hit the ball right-handed, the route taken by many lefties. The Golden Bear told him there was no reason to change his swing.

Weir kicked around the bush-league tours and had to go back to the dreaded qualifying school after a miserable 1997 season on the PGA Tour.

Two years later, Weir was in the final group of a major for the first time, paired with Woods in the PGA Championship at Medinah. Weir shot 80, but the lessons from that day would come in handy five years later.

WEIRD/ A21

'The Trailer'

SPECTATOR

Al S. Mendoza

WE can start calling Mike Weir "The Trailer." Previous to his come-from-behind Masters victory yesterday, Mike also trailed going into the final round in five of his eight PGA Tour triumphs. Two of them came earlier this year.

The 32-year-old Weir seemed destined to win his first Masters.

Weir, at one time 3 shots off the pace, was one shot behind the early finishing leader Len Mattiace with two holes to go. After missing a 10-foot putt for birdie on 16, Weir missed another birdie on the 17th when his 25-footer glanced at the hole.

But the par-4, 18th was the story of the 69th Masters.

Mattiace, who honed up his game playing in many Philippine Opens only a while back, was the main author and Weir a mere co-author.

The 35-year-old Mattiace was a par away from victory when he bogeyed 18 after misfiring his tee shot and next overshooting the green after he had played out. That dropped him to a tie for the lead with Weir at 7-under.

Weir was on in two at 18, but his long, uphill birdie putt stopped 6 feet short from the cup. But he rammed home the equalizer for a 68 to Mattiace's 65 and forged the first Masters playoff in 13 years.

Back in 1990, Nick Faldo edged out Raymond Floyd to win the Masters two years in a row. Faldo had merely duplicated a similar Masters playoff victory he scored over Scott Hoch in 1989 to reprise Jack Nicklaus' first back-to-back triumphs recorded in the Masters of 1965 and 1966. Tiger Woods was the only other man with two consecutive wins-in 2001 and 2002. But among the three, only Nicklaus got cut trying to win his third straight Masters in 1967.

Oh, well, Woods was a putt away from getting cut, too, in this year's Masters, the first of the world's four majors. And, after surviving the scare to make his 109th straight cut since he turned pro in 1996, Woods jumped into contention with a 66 to move to within 4 strokes off third-round leader Jeff Maggert. However, a final-round 75 dashed Woods' another stab at glory.

But that's getting ahead of the story.

In the first hole of yesterday's playoff at No. 10, Mattiace; garbed nattily in fleshy

THE TRAILER/ A21

Dependent.
Rosanne Prieto
Socialite
Prepare to get hooked.

■ 7 boys drown in Laguna de Bay A24

METRO

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A symbol of hope in a place of despair

By Margaux Ortiz

SHE HAS become a symbol of hope in a place of despair.

With her infectious smile that lights up her cherubic face, Alexir Monique Esplanada, 8, has never failed to bring joy to the people around her. Her recent recovery from a debilitating disease has become an inspiration to the other kids in the Philippine General Hospital Cancer Institute, who have yet to overcome their own illnesses.

Monique was 7 when she was found out to have Wilms Tumor, a cancerous growth in the kidney. She was then a Grade I student at the San Antonio Elementary School in San Pedro, Laguna.

"We found blood clots in her urine at first,"

A SYMBOL/ A24

CANCER survivor Monique Esplanada brings joy to philantrophist Ricky Reyes, the main benefactor of a playroom in the cancer ward of the Philippine General Hospital.

Firm in poisoning case operating without a permit

By Nelson F. Flores

PASIG City Mayor Soledad Eusebio yesterday said the factory that caused mass poisoning in one of the densely populated neighborhoods in the city two weeks ago is illegally operating.

Eusebio said records of her office showed that Resin-1 Chemical Corp. has yet to secure a mayor's permit to operate.

She added that the absence of a mayor's permit is a ground for closure.

"Aside from operating without the necessary permit, the plant has violated several city ordinances, including one which states that no person shall dispose toxic and hazardous waste without first securing a written authority from the mayor," Eusebio said.

Early last week, Eusebio asked the Resin-1 owners to relocate their business in other areas of Metro Manila.

"*Hindi importante ang buwis nilang ibinabayad ang mahalaga ay buhay ng aking mga* constituents (The lives of my constituents are more important than the taxes paid by the firm) ". Eusebio said.

Eusebio also directed the city legal office to determine whether Resin-1 could be held liable for the incident even while the local office of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources is conducting its own investigation. She added that clean-up operations are still going on.

Eusebio said toxic fumes leaked from chemical agent containers, which exploded due to prolonged exposure to the searing heat on April 6, causing at least 14 people, mostly children, to become sick and be hospitalized.

She added that local barangay authorities had reported that more than 200 people had complained of poisoning symptoms like dizziness, headaches, chest and stomach pains and vomiting.

Eusebio added that the factory, which manufactures vinyl and paste products, would remain closed until the factory owners corrected the problem.

Eusebio also revealed that the chemical company is owned by Meneleo Carlos, father of Marikina City Mayor Marides Carlos-Fernando, the wife of Metropolitan Manila Development Authority Chair and Public Works Secretary Bayani Fernando.

Meanwhile, one of the victims of the mass poisoning case died on April 8.

The fatality was identified by city government officials as Luciano Verjes, 68, a resident of Joe Boris Street, Barangay Bagong Ilog, the area severely affected by the contamination.

He died while undergoing treatment at the Immaculate Conception Hospital after inhaling the toxic fumes emitted by the firm.

It happens even inside a police headquarters

By TJ Burgonio

WHO says that most crimes happen only on the streets?

Probers of the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group were alerted about a stabbing incident yesterday morning, but ignored it first because they couldn't believe it could happen right under their noses.

But it did. A 38-year-old errand boy stabbed to death a colleague along the alley at the third floor of the police headquarters in Camp Crame at around 7:30 a.m., apparently incensed by the latter's bullying.

The suspect, Diomedes Almerines, was nabbed while fleeing from the scene. His victim, Cesar Sardea, died while being treated for a single stab wound at the police hospital inside the camp.

Almerines claimed that he woke up being pummeled by Sardea with a lead pipe at their CIDG quarters.

To escape further beating, he dashed out and sought refuge at a kitchen where he got hold of a knife and stabbed the pursuing Sardea.

WHAT'S INSIDE

■ Public told: Avoid traffic rush A24
■ UP execs locked up A24
■ Mayors set meet on key issues A25

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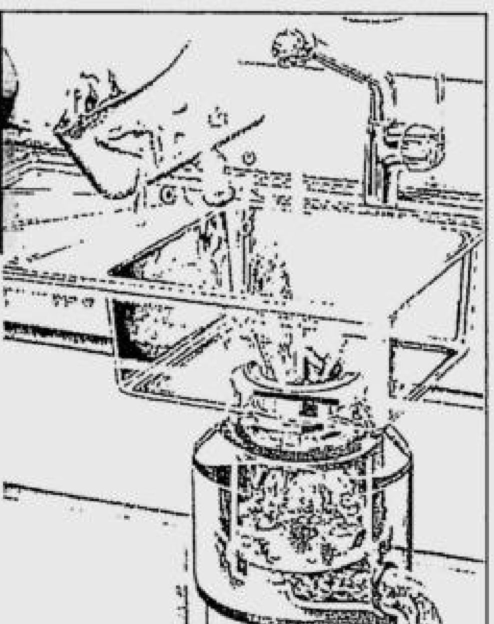

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Source: WHO

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
METRO
TUESDAY, APRIL 15, 2003

Vacationers told: Avoid traffic rush

By Leila B. Salaverria

BE PRACTICAL, avoid the rush to the provinces.

This is what the Metro Manila Development Authority yesterday told vacationers, warning them that the yearly trek to the provinces during the Holy Week is expected to snarl traffic in the metropolis.

Anticipating an onslaught of vehicles that would jam Metro Manila's exit points, particularly in the north, MMDA General Manager Robert Nacianceno said motorists could wait out the traffic jams in their homes especially if they're only going to nearby provinces.

"Maybe you can delay your trip a little instead of joining in the rush. Instead of getting stuck in traffic anyway, you could spend that time at home," Nacianceno said in the weekly MMDA radio program.

Traffic Operations Center Director Angelito Vergel de Dios said traffic is expected to build up at the North Luzon expressway on Wednesday night through Thursday morning, after work in most offices stop for the observance of Holy Week.

He said traffic gridlocks become massive usually in the NLEX and not in the SLEX, where there are several exit points. The traffic jams in the north sometimes reach all the way up to SM North-Edsa mall and Monumento, Vergel de Dios said.

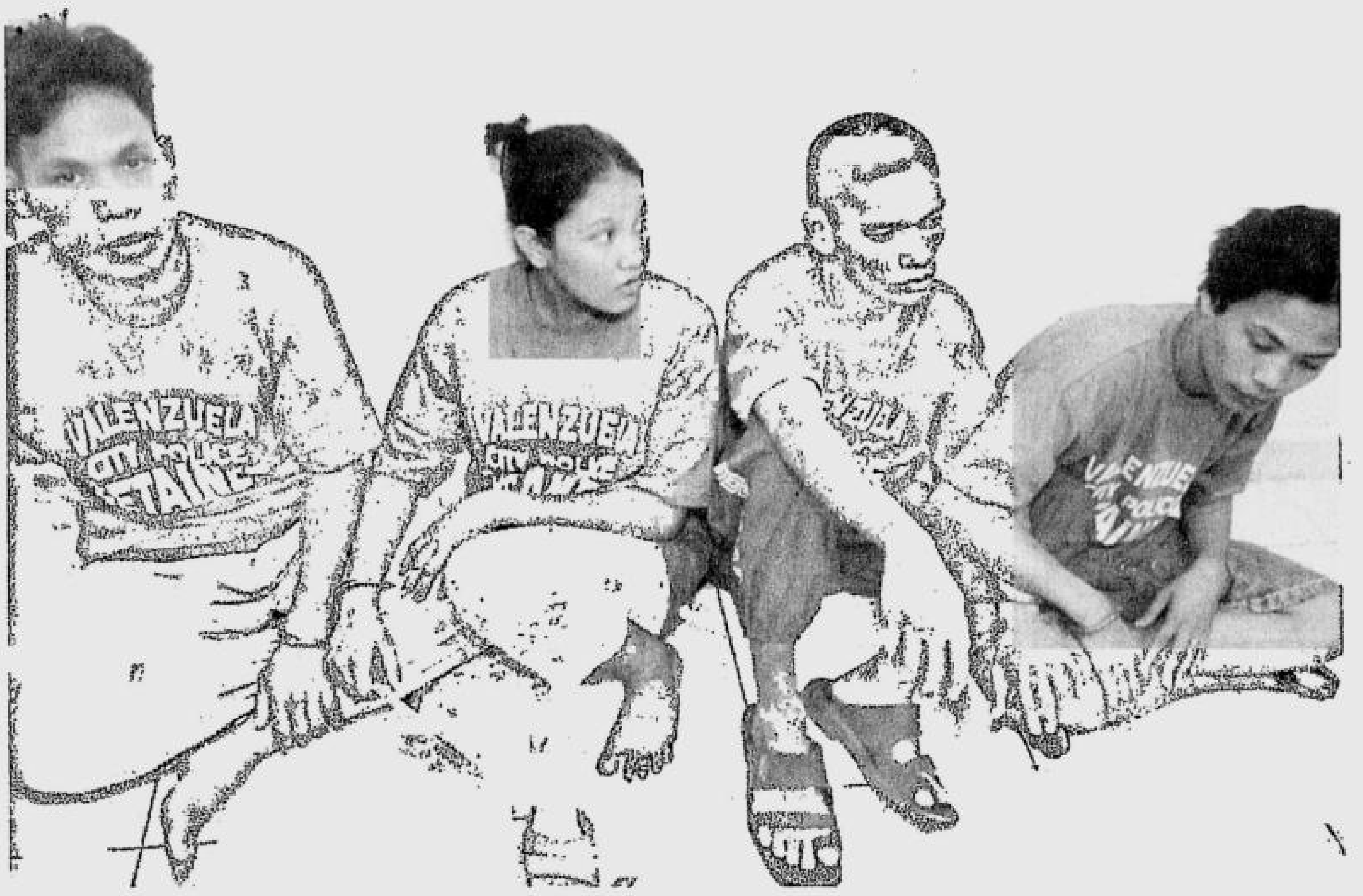
To help ensure a smooth flow of vehicles, the MMDA would be sending additional traffic enforcers on motorcycles to northern Metro Manila.

Vergel de Dios also said that motorists could take the alternative route via San Francisco del Monte in going to Bulacan.

Nacianceno also advised people going out of town not to ride in colorum buses, as they could not be sure that the operators of these vehicles would observe safety measures like inspection of baggage by security guards.

He also reminded motorists to make sure that the engines in their vehicles are in good running condition to prevent breakdowns that may further clog the roads.

The MMDA will also suspend the implementation of the number coding scheme from Wednesday to Friday, which are holidays.



ARRESTED suspects in the kidnapping of two women are presented to the media after the police raided their hideout in Valenzuela City on Sunday. From left: Norodin Odin, Bencer Welao, Jeffrey Maragiar, and Berna Edres. JOAN BONDOC

2 kidnapped women rescued in Valenzuela

By TJ Burgonio

POLICE arrested three men and a wóman who allegedly abducted two women during a raid on their hideout in Valenzuela City on Sunday morning, officials announced yesterday.

Operatives of the Northern Police District ,collared the suspects—Norodin Odin, 23; Bencer Welao, 19; Jeffrey Maragiar, 19; and Berna Edres—inside a house on Cantillon Street in Barangay Maysan at around 8 a.m.

During the raid, the operatives rescued one of the women, who had been held captive since last Wednesday. The other woman had escaped a couple of hours earlier. The identities of the victims, aged 26 and 23, were withheld.

Police Director General Hermogenes Ebdane Jr. and Deputy Director General Reynaldo Velasco, chief of the National Capital Region Police Office, presented the suspects to the media.

Police are tracking down three more suspects.

Members of the Valenzuela police swooped down on the suspects' safehouse after getting a call about the "suspicious goings-on" there from a resident at around 6 a.m. Sunday, said Supt. Cesar Binag, spokesperson of the NCRPO.

They just wanted to beat the heat

LOS BANOS, Laguna—To beat the summer heat, seven young boys took a swim and drowned in Laguna de Bay last Sunday.

Town police chief Supt. Nestor dela Cueva identified the victims as Genaro Javier, 12, his brother Christian, 10; brothers Anafran Griberto, 10, Xilenver, 8, and Arvix Perez, 7; and Elmer Jimenez, 11, and his brother Edizer, 9.

All were residents of Barangay Bayog in this town.

Police said the victims were last seen alive before noon playing basketball near the bay.

Witnesses said the group decided later to go swimming in the lake due to heat. But at about 3 p.m. on Sunday, fishermen found five bodies floating in the bay. The bodies were caught in the fishnets in the bay.

The fishermen immediately alerted the residents and barangay officials in the area.

Police said neighbors of the victims easily identified the bodies.

The bodies of Arvix Perez and Edizer Jimenez were found before dawn yesterday.

Dela Cueva said the victims could have underestimated the strong undercurrent and did not notice that the water was actually pushing them slowly into the deep portion of the bay. *Marlon Ramos, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Workers lock up UP regents

By Agnes Donato

HUNDREDS of University of Philippines employees yesterday locked up members of the UP Board of Regents who were holding a meeting inside the administration building in the Diliman campus.

Reason: They wanted their alleged unpaid cost of living allowance (Cola) paid.

Members of the All UP Workers walked out of their offices and trooped to the UP Quezon Hall and padlocked the building until Sen. Francis Pangilinan, one of the regents, spoke to them.

All UP Workers Union President Buboy Cabrera said that UP owes its employees at least P50,000 each in unpaid Cola from 1989 to 1999.

A symbol of hope in a place of despair

From page A23

Monique's mother Monina said in Filipino. "We decided to bring her to the town health center when we felt a suspicious lump in the right part of her stomach."

Ultrasound and CT scan tests showed that the little girl was in the second stage of cancer. Monique was then brought to the PGH-Cancer Institute for medical treatment.

"Although stage two of Wilms Tumor meant that our daughter still had a chance of overcoming her sickness, we were still afraid that she would not survive the ordeal because she was still very young," Monina said.

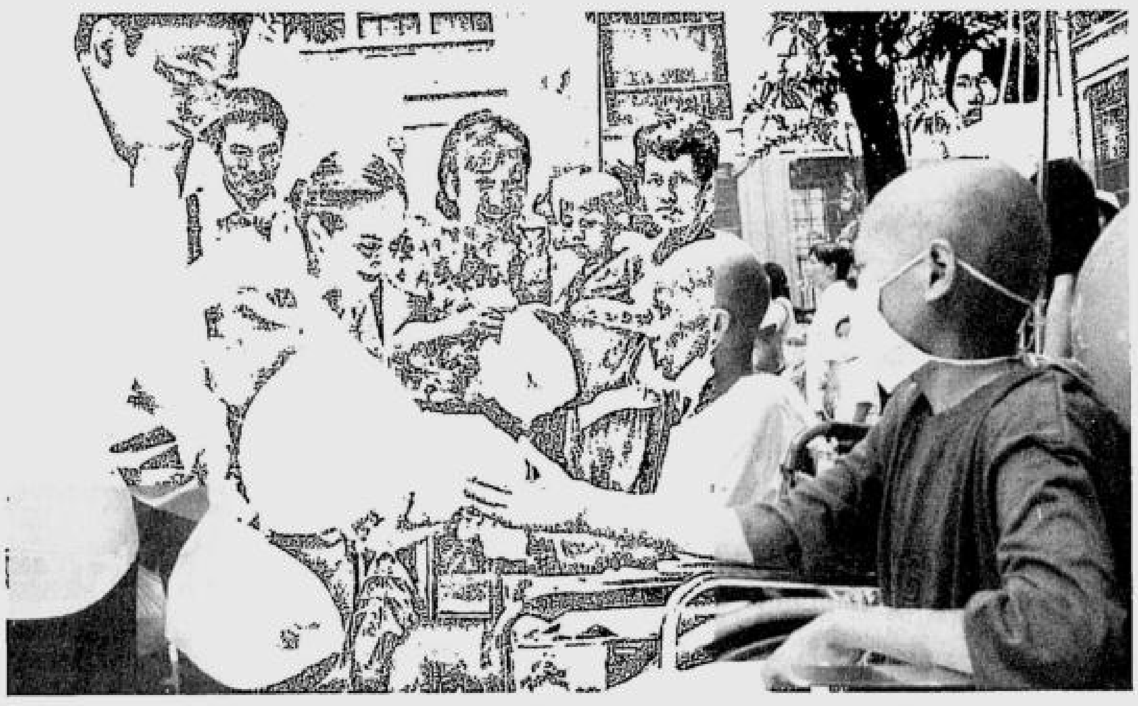
For a year, Monique stopped going to school to undergo treatment. The first 10 weeks were especially difficult for her because she had to unfailingly submit herself to chemotherapy sessions.

"It was so painful," Monique recalled in Filipino. "I remember vomiting after every treatment."

Monique's chemo treatments were soon lessened to every three weeks. But the strong medicine continued to take a toll both on her appearance and behavior. "The mere sight of the hospital made me want to vomit," Monique said. "I kept on telling my mother that I don't care what happens to me, I just didn't want to undergo chemotherapy treatments anymore."

The once vibrant child's lost hope troubled her family, especially because they had to deal with the financial problems that Monique's continuous medication entailed.

"Every chemo treatment cost us P3,000," Monique's mother, a housewife, said. Her father Alex is a factory worker.



YOUNG cancer patients at the Philippine General Hospital cancer ward receive medicines and goodies from MMDA Chair Bayani Fernando, actress Gloria Romero, and Ricky Reyes. ERIK ARAZAS

"We had to ask for financial aide from government officials to help us get by."

Monique's family would dutifully seek refuge in prayers and healing masses to ask for a miracle for their little girl.

"We just wanted her to grow up and experience all the good things life has to offer. The Lord knows that her disease had no right to take her dreams away from her," Monina said.

Her family's prayers were soon heard. After almost two years, Monique was declared a "graduate" of the institute.

"I will always remember Dec. 12 for the rest of my life," said Monique, smiling. "It was the last day of my scary chemotherapy treatments."

Monique, now fair-skinned and healthy, is a far cry from the thin, dark-skinned girl who had almost given up on life. She is also excited about going back to school in June.

"Now I could be a doctor when I grow up," she said. "I want to help the sick children the way the doctors here have helped me."

Monique is a little sad about leaving her friends in Munting Paraiso, the play area in the institute originally conceived by beauty expert and philanthropist Ricky Reyes to be a comforting haven for kids who have to undergo chemotherapy.

"I [illegible] also miss the parties here in Munting Paraiso," she said.

Children's parties are held every Christmas, on Munting Paraiso's anniversary and on Reyes' birthday.

"Somehow they made me feel that I was not alone and there are also kids who were as sick as I am," she said.

Monique would leave the institute with nothing but the scar in her stomach to remind her of her ordeal with cancer. But she will bring with her the memories of the playtime at Munting Paraiso.

"I pray that my sick friends will someday be as happy as I am today," she said with a serious expression on her face. "That they will also get well and be given a chance to study and play again."

Discriminated against in their own country

ON TARGET

Ramon Tulfo

IN THE selection of contractors to build our highways, bridges, seaports and airports, the government has excluded Filipino contractors from the line-up. Only foreign contractors are allegedly favored by the government.

For example, in the P63-billion infrastructure projects funded by Japanese loans, not one of the local contractors might be hired by the government.

The multi-billion peso projects include the :

- Mindanao Container Terminal Project.
- New Iloilo Airport Development Project.
- Subic Bay Port Development Project.
- Second Magsaysay Bridge and Butuan City Bypass Road Construction Project.
- Urgent Bridges Construction Project for Rural Development.
- Subic-Clark-Tarlac Expressway Project.
- LRT Line 1 Capacity Expansion Project (Phase II)
- Northern Luzon Wind Power Project .
- Improvement of the Marine Disaster Response and Environment Protection System Project.

Most of the above-mentioned projects will be undertaken by Japanese or Korean contractors, according to my sources in the infrastructure-building industry. The local contractors will be left out.

* * *

Okay, those projects will be funded by Japanese loans. But does the government have to exclude Filipino contractors from those projects just because they are financed with Japanese loans?

After all, we Filipinos will be paying for those loans through our taxes.

This is a case of Filipinos being discriminated against in their own country.

* * *

It took a congresswoman from Quezon province, Aleta C. Suarez, to bring out this kind of discrimination.

Suarez has filed a resolution in the House of Representatives to question the apparent blatant discrimination against Filipino contractors by the government.

House Resolution No. 1085 asks the committees on transportation and communication, and on public works and highways; the ad-hoc committee on bases conversion; and the committee on good government to look into the qualifications and criteria for the selection of qualified bidders in foreign-assisted projects. The resolution also asks why Filipino contractors are excluded from foreign-funded projects.

Local contractors hail Suarez's resolution.

* * *

To highlight the alleged discrimination against Filipino contractors, Suarez's resolution cites as an example the bidding for the Kamanava Area Flood Control and Drainage System.

Filipino contractors were not included in the pre-qualified bidding for the project which comes under the so-called Yen Package. The resolution said that the bidding was rigged to favor a Japanese contractor who allegedly failed to comply with a major requirement in the pre-qualification bid.

If that is true, why did they have to hold a public bidding?

* * *

Local contractors have long complained of hard times.

They say they cannot contracts from the private sector. If they get government contracts, they get much delayed payments for projects that had long been finished.

And, of course, they have to give advance "commissions" to government officials and employees after the contracts are awarded to them.

Local contractors are not only discriminated against by their own government, they are also "milking cows" of corrupt government officials.

* * *

Who's this department undersecretary whose application for renewal of his driver's license was denied by the Land Transportation Office after he was found positive for drug use?

My LTO sources said the results of the tests on "Usec" showed that he was using marijuana and methamphetamine hydrochloride, otherwise known as shabu.

Sayang this "Usec." He's a brilliant lawyer *pa naman* !.

* * *

Some unscrupulous firms and individuals have been selling emission certificates from testing centers authorized by the LTO.

Emission certificates are issued to vehicles which have passed anti-pollution tests from LTO-accredited centers.

A friend of mine who owns Auto Sources Inc., engaged in the sale and trade-in of new and used cars, said that fake emission certificates supposedly issued by the firm are proliferating.

The LTO should investigate the complaint.

METROBRIEFS

Killed in crash

THE AYALA tunnel along Edsa in Makati City has claimed another life: Joseph L. Delos Reyes, 28, a resident of Bormann Street in Quezon City and a graduate student at the University of the Philippines, was killed when he rammed the Toyota Revo he was driving into the left side of the tunnel at 4:30 a.m. yesterday. Police said De Los Reyes was driving on the southbound lane of Edsa. He was killed instantaneously in the crash, and his vehicle was a total wreck. De Los Reyes was apparently speeding or he could have fallen asleep on the wheel, police said. In February 2001, Michael Jose Lapuos, 21, of Dasmariñas Village, Makati City was killed when he crashed his Honda Civic into an electric post while trying to avoid the pylons that lined the left side of the tunnel. His passenger Jacklyn Roldan had said that Lapuos wanted to pass through the tunnel on their way to Parañaque and did not notice the pylons until it was too late. *Leila B. Salaverria*

Wounded in shootout

POLICE Officer 3 Rodolfo Bocayes was wounded in a shootout with two suspected holdup men on Sunday in Quezon City. Bocayes, a mobile policeman assigned at the Central Police District Station 3, took a bullet in the thigh. One of the suspects, Noel Farinas, 25, of Tala, Caloocan City, suffered a gunshot wound in the arm. Police arrested Farinas, but his unidentified companion had escaped. *Alcuin Papa*

Shot dead

MICHAEL Celo, 19, of Welfare Village in Marikina City was shot dead by unidentified men in Quezon City last Sunday. Police said that Celo, a nephew of a Quezon City police officer Alejandro Celo, died from several gunshot wounds in the body while he was waiting for a ride at the corner of Commonwealth Avenue and Litex Road at 7:30 p.m. on Sunday. Witnesses told police that the suspects who were on board a car opened fire on Celo. Police have yet to establish a motive for the killing. *Alcuin Papa*

Robbed in Quezon City

SOFTDRINK dealer Rose Marie Briones, 36, of Litex Road in Quezon City was robbed by unidentified men in her home last Saturday. Briones, who reported the robbery to police yesterday, said that she was having dinner with her relatives at 8:20 on Saturday when the suspects entered her house and announced a robbery. She said the suspects took P40,000, which she kept in her house, then boarded a passenger jeepney to escape. *Alcuin Papa*

Lenten experience

BUKAL ng Tipan in Maryhill Compound, Taytay, Rizal offers a unique Holy Week Experience on the Hill—a Last Supper in the Garden on Holy Thursday and discovering the ``Peter'' in us around a bonfire in the evenin, and carrying a cross to the top of the hill during the high noon of Good Friday. For more information and reservation, please call tel. Nos. 652-5064 ot 825-3892.

Pelobello, 63

MARIANO "Boy" C. Pelobello died of a heart attack on April 1, 2003 in Jubail, Saudi Arabia. He was 63.

He left behind his daughter Zerla, son Brian and grandson Mat-Mat; brothers (and sisters-in-law) Gabriel and Tessie, Lauro, Guilly and Evelyn, Tony and Dolly, Freddie and Cora, and the Inquirer's Louie C. Camino.

His remains lie in state at the Eric Santiago Memorial Chapels on Bayan-bayanan Avenue in Concepcion, Marikina City.

Boy will be buried tomorrow beside his wife Tessie, who died in June 1998, at the Aglipay cemetery, also in Concepcion.

Mayors set meet on key issues

By Jerome Aning

ATIENZA

MAYORS of the country's highly urbanized cities will meet in Manila next week to find common ground in pressing issues ranging from development to local autonomy.

The summit will be hosted by Manila Mayor Lito Atienza on April 25-26 at the Manila Hotel.

Atienza said at least 47 mayors of different chartered and component cities from all over the country would attend the summit.

"We will exchange views and experiences in the development of our respective cities," the mayor said in a recent interview.

Atienza said they would also try to reach a united stand on the issue of decentralization and devolution and in making the Local Government Code and existing laws more responsive to the needs of local governments.

Atienza said he believes genuine autonomy for the local government units will help solve the country's economic problems.

The mayor said the existing municipalities, cities and provinces should be empowered to have more say in planning their own development.

Atienza said he would also push for "subregional" development, instead of regional, which proponents of a federal form of government are eyeing.

The mayor also said other city chiefs are interested in Manila's development planning, which stemmed from Atienza's urban renewal program dubbed Buhayin ang Maynila.

Atienza's development projects largely involved the restoration and renovation of neglected historical sites and parks.

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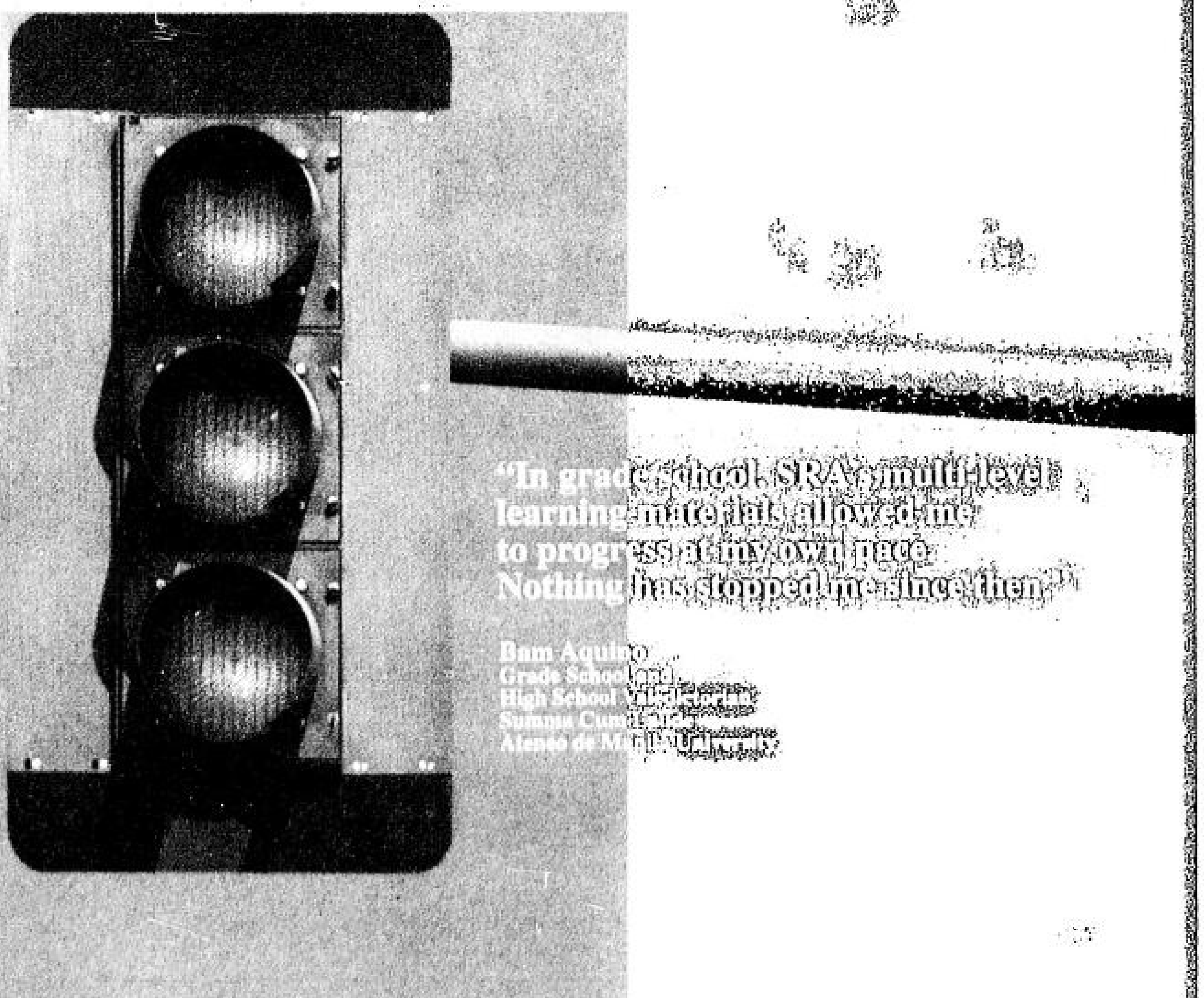
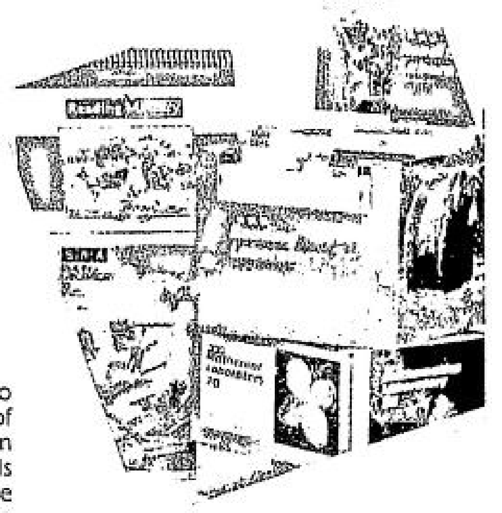

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As a young student, SRA gave Bam Aquino the freedom to explore past the covers of books, beyond the walls of his classroom and ahead of the comprehension levels of his classmates. Virtually unstoppable to this day, Bam traces his success to the critical early stages of his education.

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People, Events & Products
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Editor **Aries Espinosa**

Asian Spirit adds Clark, Pampanga to its routes

AFTER receiving its congressional franchise last month making it the country's fourth flag carrier, leading domestic air carrier Asian Spirit Airlines has immediately embarked on another expansion as it added the Clark-Caticlan route to its growing list of destinations.

Antonio Turalba Jr. and Jack Po, chair and executive vice president of the airline respectively led the first batch of passengers during the inaugural flight last week to the new Diosdado Macapagal International Airport in Clark, Pampanga.

"We will be operating three times weekly on Monday, Wednesday and Friday. From Manila, the plane departs at 11:30 a.m. for a thirty minute flight to Clark. The plane then goes back to Manila at 1:00 p.m. en route to Caticlan. One way flight from Manila to Clark or vice versa is pegged at P600. However, Clark-Caticlan fare is at P2,450 per way, the same rate as Manila-Caticlan." Po explained.

Asian Spirit is a locator at the Clark Special Economic Zone and has positioned the former U.S. Air Force base as its hub of operations in the Northern Luzon area. The airline operates new generation turbo-prop aircraft ranging from Let410, cn235, YS11 and Dash 7's.

"Opening this route is part of our commitment to serve the Central and Northern Luzon areas," Po said. "Late last year, we have also started our thrice weekly Manila-Batanes flights in addition to the resumption of our Manila-Baguio flights in October, he added. "Now residents of Central Luzon will have air transport access to the other tourist destinations that Asian Spirit services" Po added.

Presently, the airline flies to 17 destinations to and from Manila and Cebu. These include Bohol, Catanduanes, Boracay, Baguio, Batanes, Dipolog, Calbayog, Catarman, Cagayan de Oro, Surigao del Norte, Surigao del Sur, Marinduque, Mindoro and Masbate.

SECOND PURA LIMACO AWARDS
CEREMONY

SMCL HOLDS SECOND PURA LIMACO AWARDS

Saint Michael's College of Laguna (SMCL), the premier educational institution in Biñan, Laguna recently held its Second Pura Limaco Awards in celebration of the school's 27th college week. The awards ceremony paid tribute to several distinguished individuals and organizations that have played active roles in advancing the vision of its founders: (2nd to 6th from left), Biñan Doctor's Hospital Inc. medical director Dr. Nieva Olivares; Philippine Association of University Women president Dr. Teresita Quirino; Laguna 1st District Rep. Uliran Joaquin; Zonta Int'l District 17 governor Ma. Imelda Gomez and Phil. Normal University former president lawyer Lilia Garcia. Seated with the awardees are (from left): SMCL executive vice president Dr. Lourdes Almeda-Sese; SMCL vice president for academics Dr. Fara Santos (second from right) and vice chair of Miguelinda Educational Corp. Teodora Limaco (far right). Second row, (3rd and 4th from left): SMCL dean of college of business and IT Victor Manabat with former Biñan mayor and Miguelinda Educational Corp.'s director Miguelito Limaco together with SMCL school officials. Visit SMCL at its website www.smcl.edu.ph.

Annual Emergency Roadside Assistance for Nissan owners goes full blast

HERE'S some good news for Nissan light commercial vehicle owners who plan to take their vacation in Baguio City this Holy Week.

The annual Nissan Emergency Roadside Assistance (ERA 2003) will go full blast come April 16 to 19 offering on-the-spot service convenience.

Free safety inspection, free labor on repair (for the first hour of service), plus special discounts on selected maintenance parts of Nissan Patrol, Urvan Terrano and Frontier Pickups can be availed by customers who will flock to Burnham Park where Nissan motor medics are stationed to lend assistance. Discounts for selected Nissan genuine parts can be availed by cash-paying customers only.

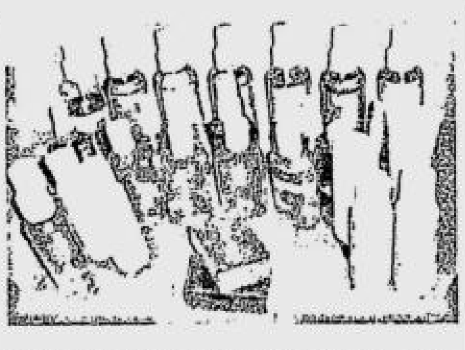
Meanwhile, participating dealers from the extensive network of Nissan Authorized Service Centers will offer some handsome treats for owners of Nissan light commercial vehicles marketed by Universal Motors Corp. (UMC) from April 21 to 30.

Clients can further pamper their posh Nissan LCVs after extensive use for the holidays by availing themselves of free spa treatments for every transaction such as free body car wash, vacuum and free safety check. Free labor (on the first hour of all repair jobs) is also a premium offer of this promo. Aside from these freebies, charges for engine wash has also been slashed by 50 percent in participating Nissan service centers nationwide. Discounts for selected parts including clutch, brakes, aircon, suspension, steering, engine and electrical items can also be enjoyed by customers this month.

This service campaign is brought to you by Universal Motors Corp. and its national service department, Univille Motors Corp.

ProductFILES

CMS offers private labeling



A division of SA Goldon Phils. Corp., Contract Manufacturing Services specialize in the development and manufacturing of different types of cosmetic products and toiletries for private labeling. These also include colognes and spa products in the form of facial, foot and body scrubs. They handle from concept development to packaging products. To know more about private labeling, contact Contract Manufacturing Services at 731-1108/39 or e-mail at info@sagoldon.com.

Clips

Easter at Edsa Shangri-La

CELEBRATE Easter with sumptuous feasts at Edsa Shangri-La's restaurants. Garden Café offers a buffet perfect for those abstaining from meat this Lenten Season. The Seafood Buffet includes squid with chili, fresh oysters, fish and chips, imported lobsters, mussels with herb sauce, and dori fillet Florentine. These are available for dinner on April 17 and 18. Enjoy the poolside Holy Week Special featuring a grill station, cotton candy and popcorn station, kiddie games and activities, ice cream, fruit shakes, and more from April 17 to 20. On Easter Sunday, those who avail themselves of the Sunday Lunch buffet get a chance to win a complimentary overnight stay for two. Try the Easter High Tea from April 17 to 20, 2 to 6 p.m. at the Lobby Lounge. For more inquiries and reservations, call 634-7373 or 633-8888 extensions 2738 or 2739.

Total spices up summer

EXCITING surprises and prizes await travelers when they stop at participating Total service stations this summer. For its Holy Week Getaway, Giveaway promo from April 16 to 20, Total will be giving away free travel kits for every minimum purchase worth P300 at La Boutique, Total's convenience store. The promo will be available at Total service stations in Lucena City, Calamba, Laguna, Sto. Tomas, Batangas, Tagaytay, Bacoor, Cavite, Balibago, Angeles City, San Fernando and Guagua, Pampanga, Tarlac, and Cabanatuan. Two other promos, Summer Getaway and Value Offer promos will also run until May 15.

Tropicana's special rates

Tropicana Apartment Hotel, one of the first services apartelles in Malate, Manila, offers special Easter rooms rates from April 17 to 20. Cool savings await families, balikbayans or groups when they avail themselves of the Easter Getaway room packages for Tropicana's recently refurbished one- or two-bedroom suites. Tropicana Apartment Hotel is located at 1630 Luis Ma. Guerrero Street, Malate, Manila. For reservations and more information, call 525-5555, fax 525-5577, or log on to www.tropicana-apt-hotel.com and e-mail troptel@pacific.net.ph.

NESTLE AND SOUTH SALES UNION SIGN CBA AGREEMENT

Nestle Philippines and the Union of Nestle Philippines Employees Sales Offices in Cebu, Davao and Cagayan de Oro recently signed a new Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) effective from April 2003 up to March 2006. Under the new CBA, Nestle will grant each member of the bargaining unit a wage increase following an agreed schedule: an increase of P2,250 per month on the first year, P1,500 per month on the second year, and P1,500 per month on the third year. The company has also unilaterally granted an industrial peace incentive amounting to P25,000 to each covered member of the union's bargaining unit in consideration of the peaceful and prompt conduct of negotiations and the non-disruption of operations during the discussions. The CBA also covered improvements in the hospitalization benefit where the limit for standard medical cases was increased from P95,000 to P100,000 per illness per year. The limit for exceptional or catastrophic medical cases (as defined by company-designated physician or medical consultant) was also increased from P95,000 to P120,000 per illness. Photo shows chair and CEO J.B. Santos applauding as union president Ernesto Bernades and Dole representative Ponciano Ligutom shakes hands after signing the new CBA.

PLDT provides Tawag Centers for OFW relatives

KUDOS to Manuel V. Pangilinan, president of PLDT for immediately setting up free call centers for OFW's affected by the war in Iraq.

PLDT has decided to set up Tawag Centers in strategic locations throughout the country in order to help relatives of overseas Filipino workers (OFW) get in touch with their loved ones working in the Middle East.

Manuel V. Pangilinan, president and chief executive officer of PLDT, said OFWs in the Middle East need all the help they can get from the government and private businesses in times of uncertainty such as this.

There will be Tawag Centers at the Ninoy Aquino Stadium in Pasay City with 150 landlines and another one in Tahanan ng Masa in Malancañang with 15 landlines. Touchcards will be donated to these Tawag Centers so OFW relatives can place long distance calls.

PLDT also installed landlines in Tawag Centers set up by the Overseas Workers Welfare Association in selected regional offices. Aside from free long distance calls, PLDT also provided DSL access to selected Owwa regional branches.

"There are millions of Filipino overseas workers in the Middle East including Iraq. It is PLDT's commitment to Philippine society to provide whatever it could help our fellow Filipinos there," said Pangilinan.

PLDT is the leading telecommunications provider in the Philippines. Through its principal business groups - fixed line, wireless and information communications technology, - PLDT offers a wide range of telecommunications services across the Philippines most extensive fiber backbone and fixed line, cellular and satellite network.

Further information can be obtained by visiting the web at www.pldt.com.ph.

VASELINE MAKES MALLING A HEALTHY SKIN EXPERIENCE

Looking for a different kind of mall experience? Make your trip to the mall an experience your skin will surely enjoy. Feed your hungry skin with a free foot spa or hand massage at the Vaseline Lotion Healthy Skin Tour. Come and experience a unique kind of nourishment as only Vaseline Lotion can give. Vaseline Lotion has a unique Triple Lipid Complex (TLC), which effectively replenishes lipids, your skin's natural moisture layer that soaps and everyday elements wash away. TLC forms a layer that protects your skin from losing water, allowing your skin to keep the moisture you need. Vaseline Lotion also contains Vitamins C and E that supply you with the necessary building blocks for healthy, nourished skin. Feed your skin with Vaseline Lotion whenever, wherever and keep skin healthy as you go shopping. Get that well-fed nourished skin experience and catch the Vaseline Lotion Healthy Skin Tour happening at SM Cebu on May 3 to 4, and at Robinsons Iloilo on May 17 to 18.

EVERYDAY
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SACRED HEART ACADEMY OF LALOMA-ESP MOA SIGNING

Sacred Heart of Laloma has enrolled in Cocolife's Employee Security Program (ESP), a special program for valued employees to purchase life insurance, pension or education plan, with salary loan, paid conveniently through automatic payroll deduction. To formalize this, a memorandum of agreement signing was held at the Sacred Heart Academy in Pasig, Metro Manila. Photo shows (from left) Mr Jimmy de la Cruz, Cocolife Timog branch manager; Mr Jose Antonio F. Kairuif, director, Sacred Heart Academy of Pasig; Ms Nikko DG Ledesma, Cocolife marketing and franchising head; Ms Lorna Gonzales, principal, Sacred Heart Academyof Pasig; Ms Rachel F. Gonzales, Cocolife marketing assistant.

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PRESENTS

G1 GLORIETTA 1	G4 GLORIETTA 4	GB1 GREENBELT 1	GB3 GREENBELT 3	ATC ALABANG TOWN CENTER
1 KANGAROO JACK	1 THE WILD THORNBERRYS	ArtFilm ANGER MANAGEMENT (ADVANCE SCREENINGS) 11:15, 1:55, 4:05, 8:15	THX GUARANTEED SEATS 1 NATIONAL SECURITY 12:25, 2:35, 4:45, 6:55, 9:05, 11:15	THX 1 NATIONAL SECURITY
2 NATIONAL SECURITY	ANGER MANAGEMENT 2 (ADVANCE SCREENINGS)	2 KANGAROO JACK 11:45, 1:45, 3:45, 5:45, 7:45, 9:45	THX GUARANTEED SEATS 2 WHAT A GIRL WANTS (Advance Screenings) 12:40, 2:50, 5:00, 7:10, 9:20, 11:30	2 KANGAROO JACK
ANGER MANAGEMENT (ADVANCE SCREENINGS)	THX 3 "WHAT A GIRL WANTS" (Advance Screenings) 12:30, 2:30, 4:30, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30	Onstage ACOUSTIC NIGHT OUT SERIES May 1, 2, 3, 9, 10, 16, 17, 23, 24, 30 & 31	GUARANTEED SEATS 3 KANGAROO JACK 1:10, 3:10, 5:10, 7:10, 9:10, 11:10	3 THE WILD THORNBERRYS
WHAT A GIRL WANTS (ADVANCE SCREENINGS)	4 KANGAROO JACK		GUARANTEED SEATS 4 THE RECRUIT 1:10, 3:45, 6:20, 8:55, 11:30	4 SOLARIS
	5 THE JUNGLE BOOK 2		GUARANTEED SEATS ANGER MANAGEMENT (Advance Screenings) 12:40, 2:50, 5:00, 7:10, 9:20, 11:30	ANGER MANAGEMENT (ADVANCE SCREENINGS)
	6 NATIONAL SECURITY			
	7 SOLARIS			

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4 GOLD (DTS ES)	KANGAROO JACK
5 GOLD-DOLBY EX	THE CORE
6 GOLD (SDDS)	NATIONAL SECURITY
7 GOLD-DOLBY EX	SOLARIS
8	JUNGLE BOOK (SNEAK PREVIEW)
9	WHAT A GIRL WANTS (SNEAK PREVIEW)
10	ANGER MANAGEMENT(SNEAK PREVIEW)

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2	DREAMCATCHERTS

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tel 930.9515

1	
2	PALABAN
3	

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1	SEX DRIVE
2	PALABAN
3	
4	

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Gotesco City

(Manila) tel 734.8588

1 (SDDS)	NATIONAL SECURITY
4	THE CORE
5	JUNGLE BOOK (SNEAK PREVIEW)
6	SEX DRIVE
7 (DTS)	KANGAROO JACK
8	ANGER MANAGEMENT (SNEAK PREVIEW)
9 (DOLBY)	SOLARIS

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2	SEX DRIVE
3	ANGER MANAGEMENT (SNEAK PREVIEW)
4 (SDDS)	NATIONAL SECURITY
5	THE RECRUIT
6 (DOLBY)	THE CORE
7 (DTS)	KANGAROO JACK
8	CORY QUIRINO STORY
9	VIRGIN PEOPLE

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3 (DTS)	NATIONAL SECURITY
4	ANGER MANAGEMENT (SNEAK PREVIEW)
5	KANGAROO JACK

Gotesco Ortigas

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2	JUNGLE BOOK (SNEAK PREVIEW)
3 (DTS)	THE RECRUIT
4	SEX DRIVE
5 (SDDS)	THE CORE

Universal

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1	SEX DRIVE

Sampaguita

(Cubao) tel 911.7888

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2	THE CORE
3	ANGER MANAGEMENT (SNEAK PREVIEW)
4	SEX DRIVE
5	PALABAN

FRC Cinema

(Talaba Bacoor Cavite)

1	
2	

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2	SEX DRIVE

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3 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	NATIONAL SECURITY
4 (SDDS)	THE CORE
5 (DTS)	KANGAROO JACK
6	SOLARIS
7	THE RECRUIT

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1	SEX DRIVE
2	WILLARD

CINEMA 2000

Cinema 2000 Target Mall

(Sta. Rosa Laguna) TEL. (049) 837-0926

1	THE CORE
2	SEX DRIVE
3 (DTS)	KANGAROO JACK

Cinema 2000 Waltermart

(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7383

1	WHAT A GIRL WANTS (SNEAK PREVIEW)
2 (DTS)	FINAL DESTINATION
3 (DOLBY)	WISH MASTER
4	ANGER MANAGEMENT (SNEAK PREVIEW)

Cinema 2000 Pavilion Mall

(Biñan) tel (049) 411.1146

1	WHAT A GIRL WANTS (SNEAK PREVIEW)
2 (DOLBY)	KANGAROO JACK
3 (DTS)	THE CORE
4	ANGER MANAGEMENT (SNEAK PREVIEW)

Cinema 2000 Cinemagix

(Urdaneta) tel(075) 568.6771

1	FINAL DESTINATION
2	CRADLE TO THE GRAVE
3 (DOLBY)	TEARS OF THE SUN
4	

Cinema 2000 MetroTown

(Tarlac) tel(045) 982.1729

1	SEX DRIVE
2	THE CORE
3 (DOLBY)	GANGS OF NEW YORK
4	WILLARD

Magic Star Cinema

(Tarlac City) tel (045) 611.4305

1 (GOLD)	SEX DRIVE
2 (DTS)	THE CORE
3	GANGS OF NEW YORK

Lianas Cinema

(Alabang) tel 850.1276

1 (SDDS)	PALABAN
2	PARU-PARONG LIGAW
3 (DTS)	SEX DRIVE
4	VIRGIN PEOPLE

Lianas MovieCity

(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202

1 (DOLBY)	THE CORE
2	SEX DRIVE
3 (DTS)	WISH MASTER
4	JAILBIRD
5	FINAL DESTINATION

Olivarez Tri-Cinema

(Biñan) tel (049) 511.8883

1	KANGAROO JACK
2	SEX DRIVE
3	SEX & ZEN

Olivarez Los Baños

tel (049) 249.2558

1	THE EYE
2	SEX DRIVE
3	SEX & ZEN

Mega Center Mall

(Cabanatuan City) tel (044) 463.3283

1	SEX DRIVE
2	TEARS OF THE SUN
3 (DTS)	DREAMCATCHERS
4	GANGS OF NEW YORK

Cabuyao

(Laguna City) tel (049) 531.4808

1 (DTS)	RESERVE
2	RESERVE

Emperor

(Rosario Cavite) tel (046) 438.1657

1	GANGS OF NEW YORK
2	SEX DRIVE
3	RESERVE

Fiesta World Mall

(Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790

1	TEARS OF THE SUN
2	GANGS OF NEW YORK
3	SEX DRIVE
4	JUST MARRIED

Jade Cinema

(Angeles City) tel (045)887-5001 TO 03

1 (DOLBY/ES)	GANGS OF NEW YORK
2	SEX DRIVE
3	THE CORE
4	JUST MARRIED

Cine Nepo Mall

(Angeles City) te (045) 887-0.21

1	WISH MASTER
2	MESSAGE SEND
3 (DOLBY)	GANGS OF NEWYORK
4	JUST MARRIED

*Movies are subject to change without prior notice

ADVANCED SCREENING THX DOLBY dts SDDS

FESTIVAL Level 4 , Festival Supermall Filinvest - Alabang

Tel. 85035-71 to 72

HE STOLE THE MONEY... AND HE'S NOT GIVING IT BACK
KANGAROO JACK
NOW PLAYING

NOW SHOWING

SM CINEMA

SM Dial-A-Movie Tel. 833-9999

NOW SHOWING

SM CITY BACOOR

4173868

1	THE WILD THORNBERRYS
2	ANGER MANAGEMENT
3	THE CORE
4	NATIONAL SECURITY
5	WHAT A GIRL WANTS
6	CLOSED
7	KANGAROO JACK
8	JUNGLE BOOK 2

SM CENTERPOINT

7149522 -7161416

1	NATIONAL SECURITY
2	THE WILD THORNBERRYS
3	KANGAROO JACK
4	JUNGLE BOOK 2
5	THE CORE
6	SEX DRIVE
7	ANGER MANAGEMENT
8	SOLARIS
9	WHAT A GIRL WANTS
10	THE RECRUIT

SM CITY FAIRVIEW

9350749

1	THE WILD THORNBERRYS
2	WILLARD
3	TEARS OF THE SUN
4	ANGER MANAGEMENT
5	NATIONAL SECURITY
6	SEX DRIVE
7	THE CORE
8	KANGAROO JACK
9	THE RECRUIT
10	JUST MARRIED
11	WHAT A GIRL WANTS
12	JUNGLE BOOK 2

SM CITY MANILA

5239240

1	WHAT A GIRL WANTS
2	NATIONAL SECURITY
3	JUNGLE BOOK 2
4	THE CORE
5	ANGER MANAGEMENT
6	THE RECRUIT
7	KANGAROO JACK
8	SOLARIS
9	SEX DRIVE
10	WILLARD
11	WILD THORNBERRYS
12	JUST MARRIED

SM MEGAMALL

6331901 • 6329401

1	GANGS OF NEW YORK
2	THE RECRUIT
3	SOLARIS
4	JUST MARRIED
5	ANGER MANAGEMENT
6	NATIONAL SECURITY
7	JUNGLE BOOK 2
8	WILD THORNBERRYS
9	WHAT A GIRL WANTS
10	THE CORE
11	SEX DRIVE
12	KANGAROO JACK

SM CITY NORTH EDSA

9295452

1	SOLARIS
2	THE CORE
3	KANGAROO JACK
4	THE WILD THORNBERRYS
5	ANGER MANAGEMENT
6	JUNGLE BOOK 2
7	NATIONAL SECURITY
8	WHAT A GIRL WANTS

SM SOUTHMALL

8066888

1	ANGER MANAGEMENT
2	WHAT A GIRL WANTS
3	NATIONAL SECURITY
4	JUNGLE BOOK 2
5	WILD THORNBERRYS
6	THE RECRUIT
7	SEX DRIVE
8	THE CORE
9	SOLARIS
10	KANGAROO JACK

SM CITY CEBU

2313876

1	TEARS OF THE SUN
2	THE CORE
3	THE WILD THORNBERRYS
4	JUST MARRIED
5	RING 2 (JAPANESE)
6	AMAZON
7	SEX DRIVE
8	THE RECRUIT

SM CITY ILOILO

3209422

1	GANGS OF NEW YORK
2	CLOSED
3	THE CORE
4	EXTREMISTS
5	DREAMCATCHER
6	THE RECRUIT
7	CLOSED
8	SEX DRIVE

SM CITY PAMPANGA

7128015

1	THE CORE
2	SEX & ZEN 2
3	JUST MARRIED
4	THE RECRUIT
5	ABANDON
6	SEX DRIVE

SM SUPER CTR. SUCAT

8294975

1	NATIONAL SECURITY
2	KANGAROO JACK
3	JUNGLE BOOK 2
4	WHAT A GIRL WANTS

SM CINEMA TUTUBAN

2514302

1	THE CORE
2	SEX DRIVE
3	NATIONAL SECURITY
4	KANGAROO JACK

SM CITY DAVAO

2976998

1	DREAMCATCHER
2	EXTREMISTS
3	TEARS OF THE SUN
4	THE CORE
5	THE WILD THORNBERRYS
6	THE RECRUIT

SM BICUTAN

776-3055

1	NATIONAL SECURITY
2	WHAT A GIRL WANTS
3	KANGAROO JACK
4	ANGER MANAGEMENT

SM CITY CAGAYAN DE ORO

859-2884

1	TEARS OF THE SUN
2	JUST MARRIED
3	THE CORE
4	GANGS OF NEW YORK

THE PODIUM CINEMA

18 ADB Avenue Ortigas Center Mandaluyong City

633-8976

1	**SOLARIS** 11:40 FS/12:10 MF/2:20/4:30/6:40/8.50/ 10:30 LFS/11:00 LMF/12:40 END
2	**THE WILD THORNBERRYS MOVIE** 11:00 FS/11:30 MF/1:25/3:20/5:15/7:10/9:05 10:30 LFS/11:00 LMF/12:25 END

LATE NIGHT SCREENING DURING FRIDAYS AND SATURDAYS

Matinee : P100.00 • Screening until 5pm • Monday thru Friday

Regular Rate P120.00 • After 5pm • Saturday • Sunday • Holidays (Reserved Seating)

Movies are subject to change without prior notice

MOVIEWORLD CINEMAS @ Robinsons Malls

call-a-movie: 536- 7812

NOW SHOWING

Galleria

632- 9115- 16
633- 7641 loc. 279

THX	THE CORE 11MF, 1:45, 4:30, 7:15, 10:00, 12:15 MF
2	KANGAROO JACK
3	JUST MARRIED
4	THE RECRUIT
5	NATIONAL SECURITY
6	SOLARIS
7	DREAM CATCHER
8	SEX DRIVE
9	WILLARD
10	WILD THORNBERRY

MATINEE PRICE: P90 THX cinema P75 level cinemas Mon.- Fri. 10am - 4pm (EXCEPT HOLIDAYS)

Ermita

536 -7809- 12

1	THE CORE
2	THE RECRUIT
3	SOLARIES
4	KANGAROO JACK
5	SEX DRIVE
6	WILD THORNBERRY
7	NATIONAL SECURITY

Metro East - Marcos hway

682- 8193 / 8280

1	WILD THORNBERRY
2	SOLARIES
3	THE CORE
4	NATIONAL SECURITY
5	THE RECRUIT
6	WILLARD
7	KANGAROO JACK
8	SEX DRIVE

Novaliches

935- 3229 - 30

1	THE CORE
2	WILLARD
3	THE RECRUIT
4	KANGAROO JACK
5	DREAM CATCHER
6	WILD THORNBERRY
7	JUST MARRIED
8	SEX DRIVE

Malabon Citisquare

288-0985 / 288-2575

1	NATIONAL SECURITY
2	KANGAROO JACK
3	SEX DRIVE
4	PALABAN

Star Mills- San Fernando, Pamp

875- 1927
961- 5318 / 5270

1	ABANDONED
2	SEX DRIVE
3	JUST MARRIED
4	JAIL BIRDS
5	SEX & ZEN
6	THE CORE

Imus

471- 8188 / 875- 3838

1	THE CORE
2	NATIONAL SECURITY
3	WILD THORBERRY
4	KANGAROO JACK
5	SEX DRIVE
6	WILLARD

Sta. Rosa Laguna

049-8370907

1	KANGAROO JACK
2	THE CORE
3	PALABAN
4	SEX DRIVE
5	JAIL BIRD

Bacolod

441- 0453 / 0459

1	FINAL DESTINATION
2	DREAM CATCHER
3	THE RECRUIT
4	THE CORE
5	THE EYE
6	ASTERIX & OBELIX

Iloilo

336- 8077 - 78

1	THE CORE
2	DREAM CATCHER
3	THE RECRUIT
4	EXTRIMIST
5	GANGS OF NEW YORK
6	SEX DRIVE

MOVIES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE.

Viva Concerts presents top bands in 'Acoustic Nights Out' at Onstage

VIVA Concerts presents "Acoustic Nights Out" in May at Onstage in Makati.

The concert series features the country's leading pop groups Freestyle, Side A and South Border, with fast-rising singer-guitarist Paolo Santos and a number of special guests.

Freestyle is the group behind big hits like "Before I Let You Go," "So Slow," "Good Luv" and the more recent "I Wanna Get Close."

Freestyle opens the "Acoustic" season on May 1, Thursday, with singer-songwriter Ogie Alcasid as guest.

The Freestyle show continues May 2 and 3, with guests Malik and Bituin Escalante, the voice behind the hit single "Kung Ako na Lang Sana."

South Border, the band that popularized "Kahit Kailan" and "Losin' My Mind" takes over on May 9 and 10, with pop princess Ana Fegi and Rada.

The Side A quintet performs May 16 and 17. Composed of Naldy Gonzales on keyboards, Joey Generoso on vocals, Kelly Badon on guitar, Joey Benin on bass and Ernie Severino on drums.

Side A has been on top of the local music scene for 16 years now and is behind big sellers like "Forevermore," "So Many Questions" and "Hold On" among many others.

Joining the band onstage in "Acoustic Nights" is actor Cesar Montano.

Paolo Santos joins the "Acoustic Night Out" on May 23 and 24, with Barbie Almalbis, Nina and Pido.

Side A brings the series to a close on May 30 and 31.

Tickets at P1,300, P1,100 and P800 are now available at Onstage, Ticketworld and all National Bookstore branches.

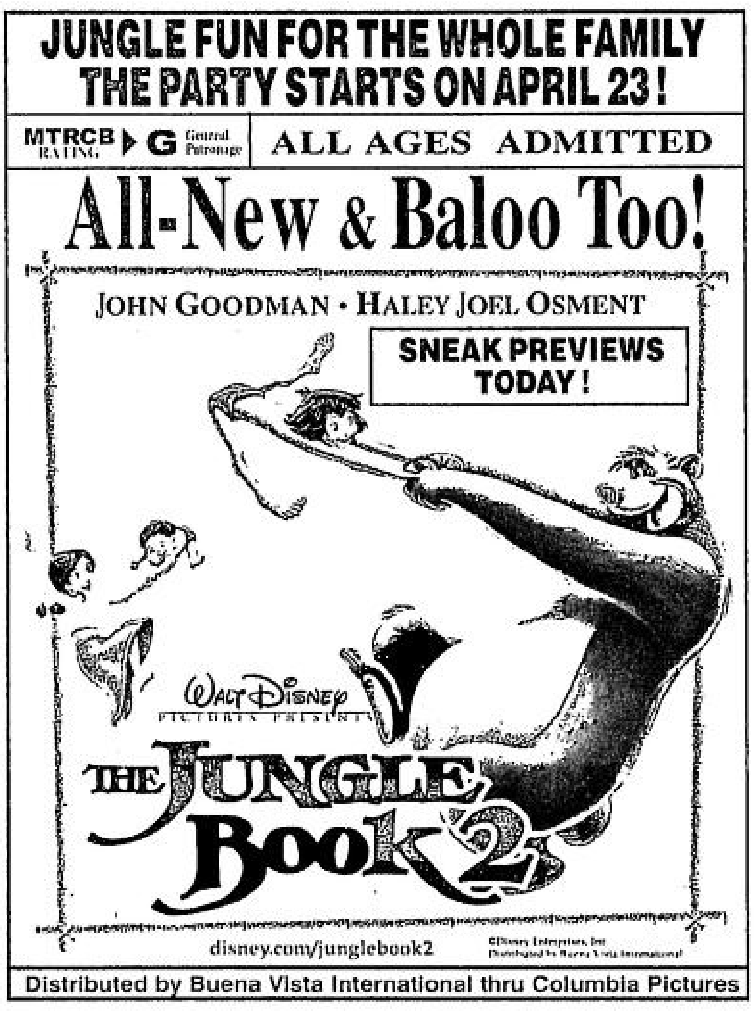
SIDE A.

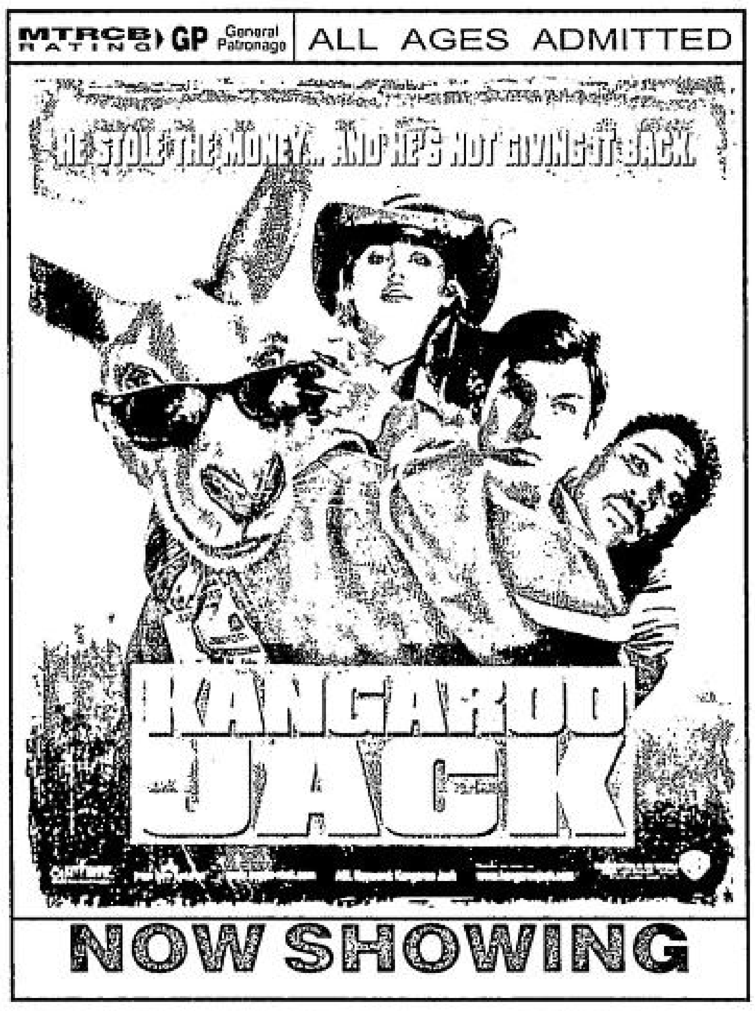
Araneta Center ENTERTAINMENT GUIDE

ALI MALL CINEPLEX 7	
Ali 1	SEX DRIVE
Ali 2	TEARS OF THE SUN
Ali 3	NATIONAL SECURITY
Ali 4	THE CORE
Ali 5	KANGAROO JACK
Ali 6	SOLARIS
Ali 7	THE RECRUIT
FARMERS PLAZA CINEMAS	
Farmers 1	SEX DRIVE
Farmers 2	WILLARD
ARANETA COLISEUM	
APR 17 & 18	SHALOM
APR 20	PBA GAMES
APR 21 & 23	NCA 7 COCK DERBY
ELEPHANT WORLD	
	ELEPHANT EASTER
	PARADE - SUNDAY
	APRIL 20 4PM

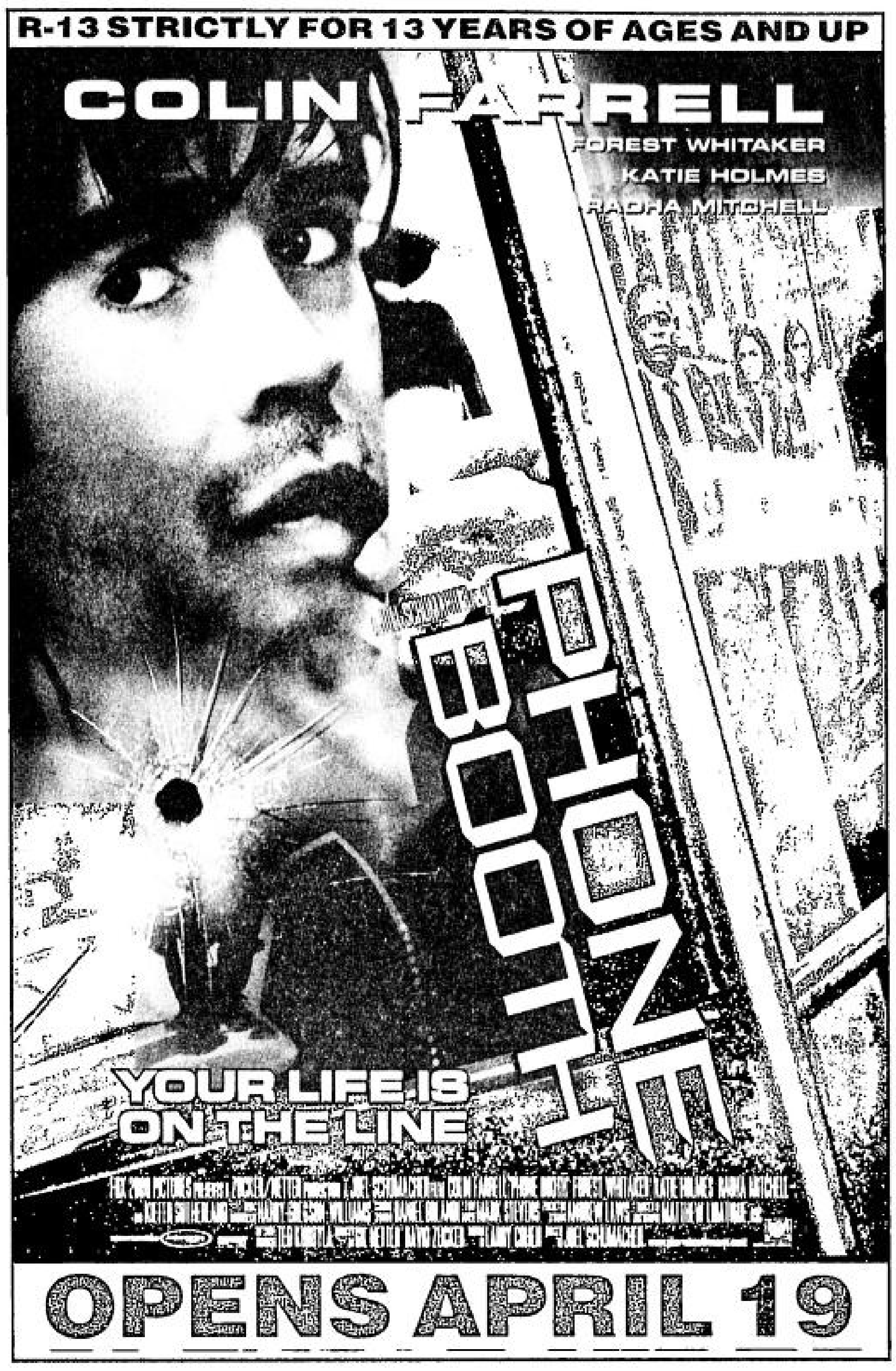
THEATER MOVIE GUIDE

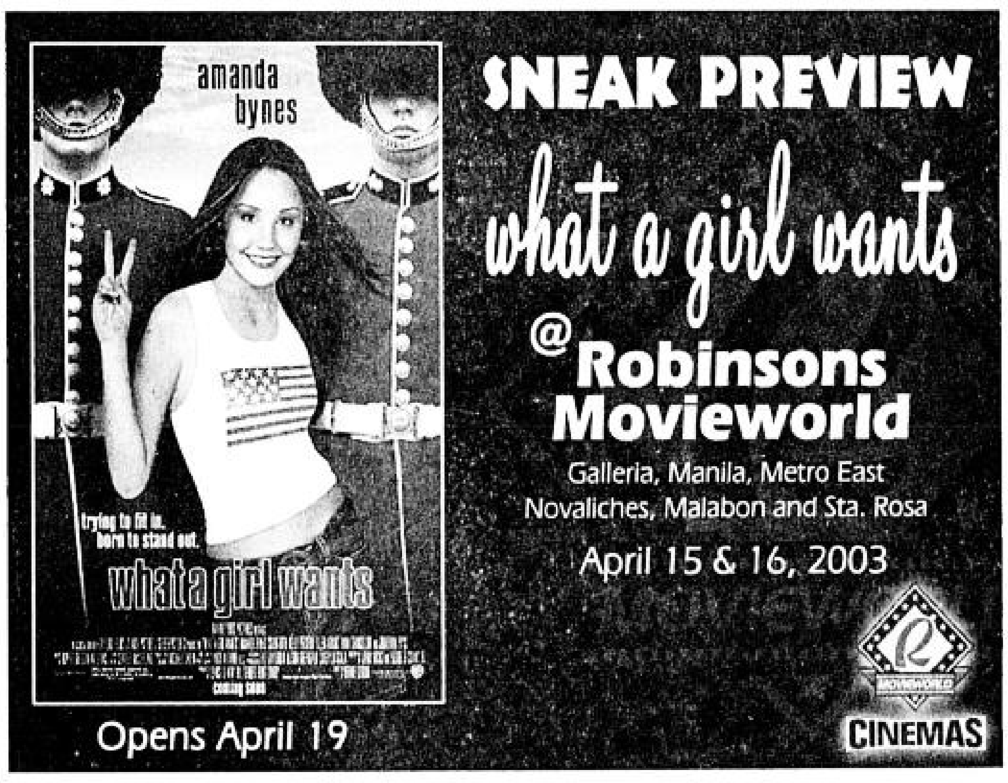
MANILA	
EASTERN	
MAXIM	CLOSED
MIRAMAR	MATAMIS HANGGANG DULO/BETTER THAN SEX
ODEON	THE CORE
ODEON-2	BUSINESS FOR PLEASURE/KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
ROBEN	SEX DRIVE
TANDEM-1	SUGAT
TANDEM-2	KATAWAN MO LANGIT KO
TIMES	BELOW EXTREMIST
QUEZON CITY	
ACT-1	SENSUAL ISLAND
ACT-2	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
ACT-3	ORIGINAL SIN
ACT-4	HANGGANG KAILAN KA PAPATAY
CORONET A	HAPPY HOUR
CORONET B	VIRGIN PEOPLE III
QUEZON-1	VIRGIN PEOPLE
REMAR	SEX DRIVE
REMAR-2	CORY QUIRINO STORY
NOVA MALL - NOVALICHES CINEMA	
A	YOU & ME AGAINST THE WORLD
B	RAMPADORA
C	
MANDALUYONG CITY	
SHANGRI-LA PLAZA MALL	635-20-79 / 633-78-51 TO 70
CINEMA-1	KANGAROO JACK
CINEMA-2	THE RECRUIT
CAINTA RIZAL	
STA. LUCIA EAST	(681-5401 TO 19)
CINEMA-1	PALABAN
CINEMA-2	VIRGIN PEOPLE 3
CINEMA-3	HAPPY HOUR
CINEMA-4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	RECRUIT
CINEMA-5 (DTS)	WISH MASTER
CINEMA-6	SEX DRIVE
CINEMA-7	PARU PARONG LIGAW
CINEMA-8	ASTERIX & OBELIX
CINEMA-9 (DTS)	SOLARIS
CINEMA-10 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	KANGAROO JACK
CINEMA-11 (SDDS)	NATIONAL SECURITY
CINEMA-12	WILD THORNBERRY'S
CINEMA-14	THE CORE
CINEMA-15	WILLARD
LORES	
CINEMA-2	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-3	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
NE CINEMAGIC - CABANATUAN	
CINEMA 1	DIE ANOTHER DAY
CINEMA 2	BAHID
CINEMA 3	HARRY POTTER
CINEMA 4	[illegible]
UNIWIDE COASTAL MALL	
(PARANAQUE)	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-1	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
CINEMA-2	MEN IN BLACK II
CINEMA-4	SELDA

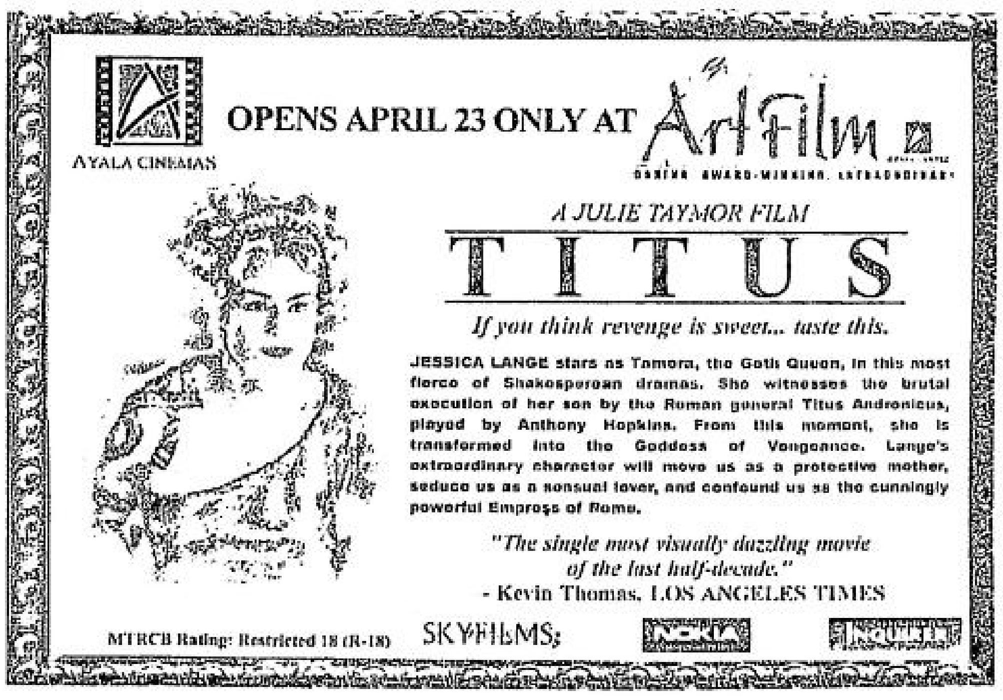

JUNGLE FUN FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY
THE PARTY STARTS ON APRIL 23 !
MTRCB RATING ▸ G General Patronage ALL AGES ADMITTED
All-New & Baloo Too!
JOHN GOODMAN • HALEY JOEL OSMENT
SNEAK PREVIEWS TODAY !
Walt Disney Pictures presents
THE JUNGLE BOOK 2
disney.com/junglebook2
Distributed by Buena Vista International thru Columbia Pictures

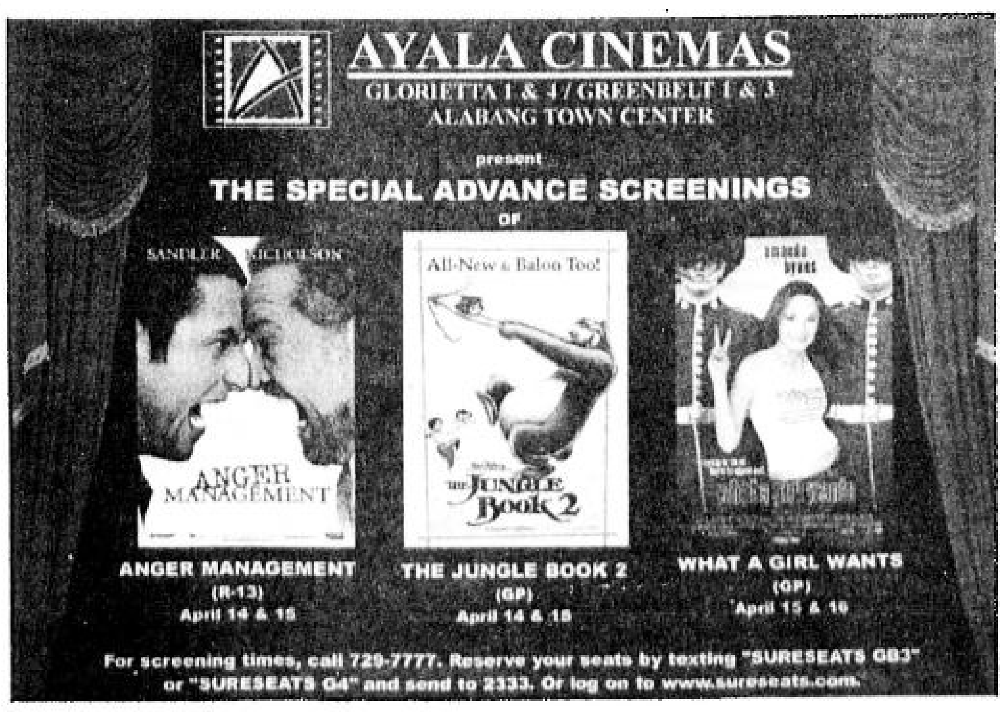

MTRCB RATING ▸ GP General Patronage ALL AGES ADMITTED
HE STOLE THE MONEY... AND HE'S NOT GIVING IT BACK.
KANGAROO JACK
NOW SHOWING

MTRCB RATING: G-ALL AGES ADMITTED
amanda bynes
trying to fit in. born to stand out.
what a girl wants
OPENS APRIL 19


R-13 STRICTLY FOR 13 YEARS OF AGES AND UP
COLIN FARRELL
FOREST WHITAKER
KATIE HOLMES
RADHA MITCHELL
PHONE BOOTH
YOUR LIFE IS ON THE LINE
OPENS APRIL 19


amanda bynes
trying to fit in. born to stand out.
what a girl wants
Opens April 19
SNEAK PREVIEW
what a girl wants
@Robinsons Movieworld
Galleria, Manila, Metro East
Novaliches, Malabon and Sta. Rosa
April 15 & 16, 2003
MOVIEWORLD CINEMAS


AYALA CINEMAS
OPENS APRIL 23 ONLY AT ArtFilm
DARING. AWARD-WINNING. EXTRAORDINARY.
A JULIE TAYMOR FILM
TITUS
If you think revenge is sweet... taste this.
JESSICA LANGE stars as Tamora, the Goth Queen, in this most fierce of Shakespearean dramas. She witnesses the brutal execution of her son by the Roman general Titus Andronicus, played by Anthony Hopkins. From this moment, she is transformed into the Goddess of Vengeance. Lange's extraordinary character will move us as a protective mother, seduce us as a sensual lover, and confound us as the cunningly powerful Empress of Rome.
"The single most visually dazzling movie of the last half-decade."
- Kevin Thomas, LOS ANGELES TIMES
MTRCB Rating: Restricted 18 (R-18)
SKYFILMS
NOKIA
INQUIRER


AYALA CINEMAS
GLORIETTA 1 & 4 / GREENBELT 1 & 3
ALABANG TOWN CENTER
present
THE SPECIAL ADVANCE SCREENINGS
OF
ANGER MANAGEMENT
(R-13)
April 14 & 15
THE JUNGLE BOOK 2
(GP)
April 14 & 15
WHAT A GIRL WANTS
(GP)
April 15 & 16
For screening times, call 729-7777. Reserve your seats by texting "SURESEATS GB3" or "SURESEATS G4" and send to 2333. Or log on to www.sureseats.com.

Bridges unites secular, spiritual in their songs

IT STARTED with a dream, a dream to make the secular and the spiritual become one. To accomplish this, a bridge was needed to connect the two opposing ideas.

That was how Bridges was born.

Bridges is the latest Christian band under the Praise Inc. label. Their first album is called "Unseen."

Composed of five young men from various persuasions, Bridges performs contemporary music with meaningful messages.

John Joshua Paz, 16, the lead vocalist, started singing at age four. He once played Joseph in "Joseph The Dreamer," staged in UP Los Baños. He is a fresh graduate of the Faith Christian School in Cainta, Rizal.

Paul Joseph Fonda, a boy-next-door material, plays the keyboard. Artistic and sports-minded, he started going on mission trips at age nine.

Drummer Cyrus Laroco is the band's big brother. He studied at the UP College of Music and has done 12 gospel recordings. He teaches drum-playing. He considers his participation in Ryan Cayabyab's concert in the Philippine International Choir Festival a few years ago as his biggest achievement.

Guitarist Immanuel Ang Fernando is a musical arranger, lead guitarist and keyboardist. He has lectured in outreach programs and taught in children's church camps. He is also a session musician for other artists.

Bassist Jamine Echin is another all-around guy. He sings, raps and dances. He is currently part of the band of Jolina Magdangal.

For inquiries about Bridges, call Leny of Praise at 9205291.

MUSIC WITH MEANING. Bridges members John Joshua Paz, Paul Joseph Fonda, Cyrus Laroco, Immanuel Ang Fernando and Jamine Echin.

The stars' own private Calvary

From page A30

with the help of God, I was able to get back on my feet. I got to know myself more and learned how to serve my countrymen better."

Happy in heaven

Pops Fernandez: "One of the most painful moments in my life was when my dad passed away. Losing someone to death is permanent and the pain stays. But when you lose someone you love because of other reasons, the pain subsides eventually. Because my dad was in prison when I was growing up, I wasn't able to spend time with him although all my visits to him stand out in my memory. What saw me through after his death was knowing that he accepted the Lord as his savior before he died. That gives me peace because for sure my dad is happy in heaven with our Father."

Evangeline Pascual: "I went through hell when my husband died because of cancer. I took care of him all the way. We even went to the US for further treatment but it was all in vain. Even if it was financially draining, it was nothing compared to the emotional torture that I went through seeing him weaken daily. At the same time I had to be strong for my children. When he died, it was as if my life crumbled. I mourned for years. Till now, I can't help but cry when I remember him. Maybe that's why I've never remarried. It was the support of my kids and fervent prayers that helped me bounce back."

Hard times

Diether Ocampo: "The hardest time in my life was when I was still a wanderer. I was lost in every sense of the word. I didn't know what I wanted and where I was going. I tried odd jobs till someone spotted me and asked me to try show biz. It was a long, hard climb. But looking back, I still would want to go through all those struggles because if not for those hard times, I would not have striven to be a better me and perhaps I wouldn't value the blessings I have now if I got them the easy way. My perseverance and God's guidance were my main source of strength."

Riki Kwek: " Since I'm a romantic fool, I mourn when a relationship ends. It's like a part of me goes with every good-bye. Especially when you have to end it even if you don't exactly want to. But I'm no masochist, so after a while, I pick up the pieces and give my heart another chance to be happy. I think it's all in the attitude, and non-stop prayers with loads of emotional support from friends helped me get back in the swing of things."

Believing

Dina Bonnevie: "Separation is usually messy. I must say it has been quite an agony having gone through two marriages. But I'm not the type who would sulk and wallow in self-pity. It helps when you focus not too much on the pain but on the lessons it taught you. I don't think it's right to jump into another relationship after ending one. You must give your body, mind, heart and soul enough time to recover. Believing in God first and then believing in yourself is the best coping mechanism ever."

As my Holy Week message to all of you, try to consider whatever suffering you have as your sacrificial offering to God. In His time, He will not only heal the pain but also take away all the scars so that you would not even remember what hurt is.

May the experiences of the stars show you that even if we all die a little as we go through our own "Stations of the Cross," it won't be long before we celebrate our own private Easter at many points in our lives.

For feedback, e-mail friends_at_dsquare@yahoo.com or jaimealsan@yahoo.com

'KOOL KA LANG' IN PUERTO GALERA
Award-winning and top-rating sitcom "Kool Ka Lang" continues to cater summer sizzlers at 9 p.m. on Tuesdays on GMA 7. In tonight's episode, "Pearly Shell," the gang takes viewers to Puerto Galera in Mindoro, an ideal vacation locale that draws tourists from all over the world. Beauty queen Nina Ricci Alagao joins mainstays Benjie Paras (left) and Long Mejia. Other guests are sexy singer Diwata and comedian Isko "Brod Pete" Salvador. Also starring Joey Marquez, Raymart Santiago, Dagul, Gloria Diaz, LJ Moreno and Maureen Larrazabal.

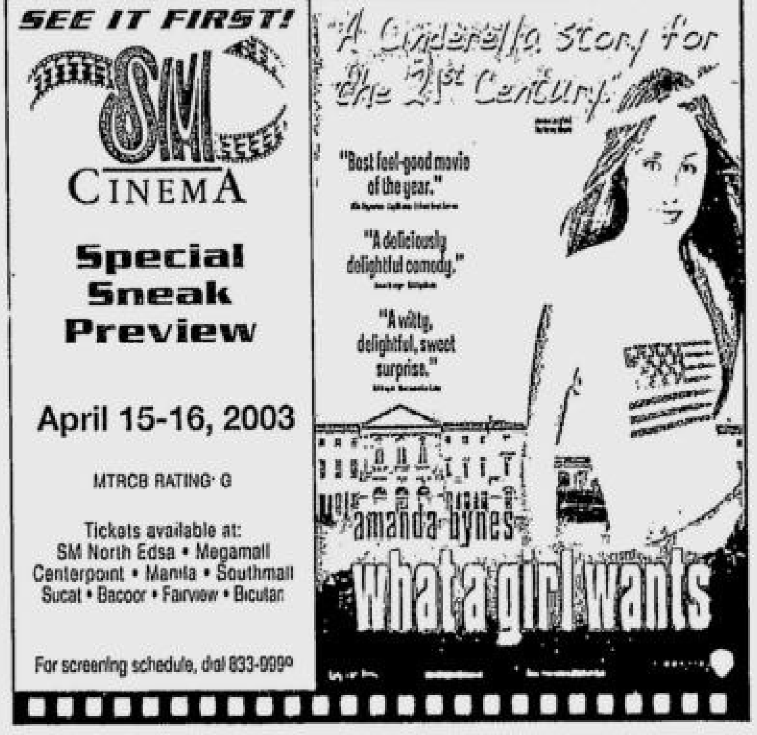
POWER PLANT CINEMA
Rockwell Center, Makati City ☎ Tel. No: 8981440-41 DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND-EX

WILD THORNBERRYS GP 11:40,1:40,3:40, 5:40,7:40,9:40	JUNGLE BOOK 2 - GP 12:30,2:10,3:50,5:30 ANGER MANAGEMENT - P13 7:15,9:40	SOLARIS - R13 1:30, 3:40 WHAT A GIRL WANTS - P13 5:50, 8:00, 10:10
NATIONAL SECURITY P13 12:10,2:10,4:10, 6:10,8:10,10:10	KANGAROO JACK GP 1:25,3:35,5:45, 7:55,10:00	THE RECRUIT P13 12:40, 3:05, 5:30, 7:55, 10:20

MATINEE P80.00 - FREE SEATING - SCREENINGS BEFORE 5 PM - MON. TO FRI.

THEATRE MALL
GREENHILLS
a landmark reinvented!
DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND-EX
NOW SHOWING
CINEMA 1 THE RECRUIT - P13 / ANGER MANAGEMENT - R 13
CINEMA 2 NATIONAL SECURITY 11:00, 1:10, 3:20, 5:30, 7:40, 9:50 P13
TICKET PRICES & SCREENING TIME SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE.
GREENHILLS SHOPPING CENTER, ORTIGAS AVENUE, GREENHILLS, SAN JUAN, METRO MANILA • 7224496

MUSIC MUSEUM
APR 29,2003 "THIS is ME!" (Ana Llanes) 8:30PM
FOR INQUIRIES & RESERVATION, PLS. CALL: 721-6726 OR 721-0635



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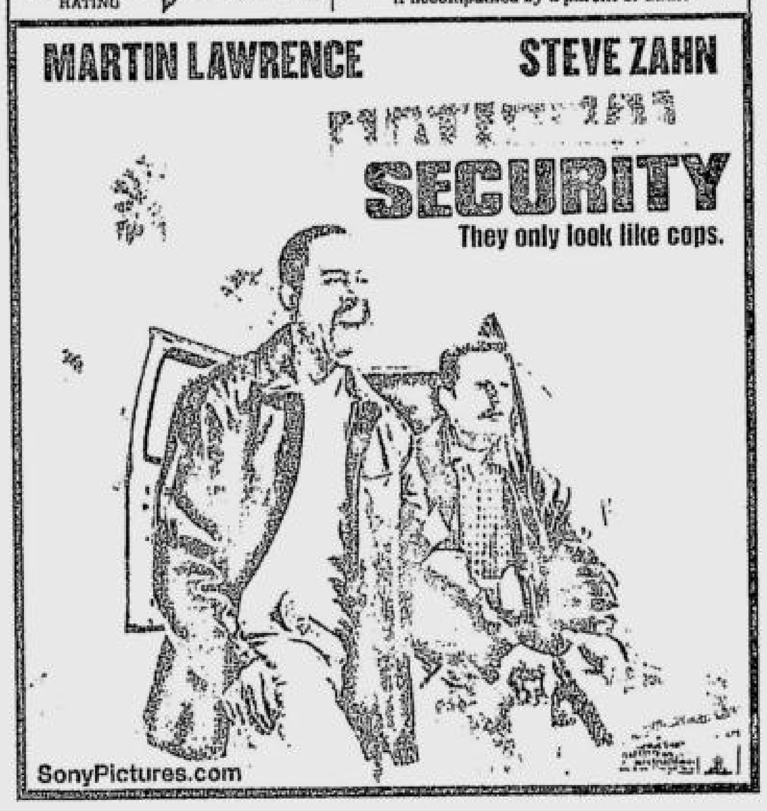

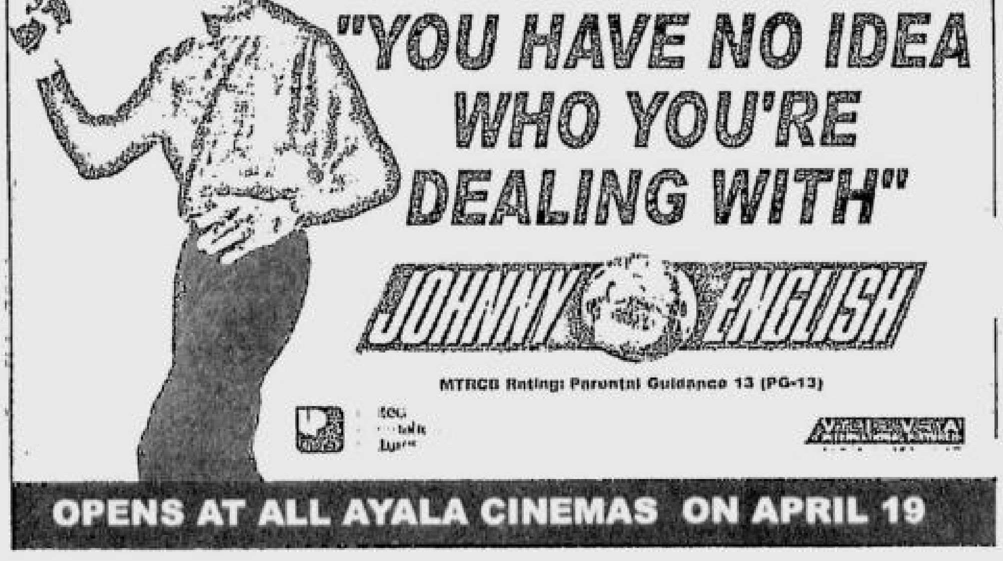

MTRCB Rating: Parental Guidance 13 (PG-13)
OPENS AT ALL AYALA CINEMAS ON APRIL 19

Vicious competition

VIEWFINDER
Nestor U. Torre

TIME was when hosts of competing TV shows didn't hit each other. It was some sort of gentleman's agreement that kept things at least civil even in the heat and smoke of cutthroat competition.

Well, times have sure changed (translation: deteriorated), because some TV hosts now hit their rivals with bitchy impunity. Just in the past couple of weeks, we've heard these tirades on the boob tube:

Janice de Belen prefers younger guys.

Joey Marquez plays the field.

Anjo Yllana's marriage is on the rocks.

And **Cristy Fermin** is no raving beauty!

What's going on here? Competition between the major channels has become so vicious that program hosts are hitting their rivals below the belt, making televiewing much less pleasant than it used to be.

The wonder is the fact that channel executives are permitting their on-camera talents to sink so low. Or, could it be that they themselves are behind this change for the worse on our TV screens? Let's hope not, otherwise the situation will get worse before it gets better. And it should get better fast, or-else viewers may get completely turned off.

Is **Vilma Santos** going to make a best actress grand slam for her outstanding performance in "Dekada '70? People who are keeping count note that Vilma now has four awards, with only two more film competitions to go (the Urian and the FAMAS) Before the current awards season ends.

When the smoke clears, let's hope that Vilma does get her grand slam, if only to embarrass the people who made her lose in last December's Metro filmfest.

The question now is, what will Vilma do for an encore this year? We hope that she will commission some young writers to think up substantial storylines for her to choose from.

They could come up with fresh concepts to add a new dimension to her acting career, and she in turn would be giving some young scriptwriters the break they so badly need to start working in mainstream filmmaking.

What do you say, Vi? We can work it out for you.

Stanley's Defense Studio offers for classical judo taught by former national champions and coaches. Classical jujitsu from the Japanese Cedar Mountain School discipline is also offered, as well as basic taekwando, karate, muay Thai (kick boxing), pencak silat (from Indonesia) and Russian Sambo.

The studio also offers aerobics, taebo and the new craze, taefu (taekwando and kung fu combined in dance moves), developed by veteran instructors who spearhead the studio's dance program. Call 713-0047 or 0919-5698407.

Stanley's Defense Studio is at 128 G. Araneta ave., QC, near SM Centerpoint. Summer sessions are from April 21 to May 31.

Corban Learning Center has slated a Creative Writing for Kids seminar from April 21 to May 2, 2:30 to 4 p.m. The seminar is for children aged 9 to 14.

It will be facilitated by **Mona Gonzalez**, a veteran journalist-educator who is parenting editor for Moms and Kids magazine, a columnist for two publications, and regular contributor to two magazines with Asian Circulation.

Call 842-6665 or 0919-2420238, or visit Corban at Unit F, MB Aguirre Bldg., President's Ave. Corner Elizalde St., BF Commercial Center, Parañaque.

After an extensive search, MTV Philippines has chosen the 14 finalists in its VJ Hunt for 2003: **Patricia Benedicto, Reema Chanco, Kym De Guzman, Patty Laurel, Alia Parcs, Toni Taus, Kelly Davis, Johann Ekedum, Greg Martin, Edward Mendez, Jeff Rodriguez, Chase Tinio** and **Niño Tupas.**

The grand finals will be held on May 16 in Intramuros.

Movies on TV

ON HBO: Wednesday, April 16 at 7 p.m., "Mission: Impossible, 2." 9 p.m., "Almost Famous." Thursday, April 17 at 12 noon, "Witness."

Friday, April 18 at 8 a.m., "Cinema Secrets: Remarking Reality." 2 p.m., "Coming to America." Saturday, April 19 at 12:30 p.m., "Save the Last Dance." 4 p.m., "The Secret Garden." 9 p.m., "Black Rain." 4 a.m., "Cinema Secrets: Vision of the Future."

Summer creativity camp

CORBAN Learning Center has slated a Creativity Camp this summer for children aged 2 1/2 to 6. The fun workshop offers lessons designed to enhance learning, imagination and creativity through arts, crafts, activities, music and field trips. From April 21 to May 23, 10 a.m. to 12 noon. Participants are also welcome to use camp's day care facilities for the entire day. Call 842-6665 or 0919-2420238.

Judge rules in favor …

From page A30

case was not brought about privacy but about a commercial deal–money and control."

During the trial, the 33-year-old Welsh-born actress said she was upset by one picture of Douglas feeding her a piece of wedding cake "because I did not want my husband shoving a spoon down my throat to be photographed ... it looks like all I did was eat."

Another picture caused her distress because it made her look "large" in her Christian Lacroix wedding dress.

Within weeks of first appearing in court during the drawn-out case, eight-months pregnant with her second child, Zeta-Jones scooped an Oscar for best supporting actress for playing murderous Velma Kelly in the hit musical "Chicago."

If the couple had won their claim to invasion of privacy the case would have set a precedent in England, where traditionally there is no right to privacy.

However, the country's confidentiality laws require anyone with a "duty of confidence" to someone else not to publish private information.

The judge said that the fact that the magazines had competed to cover the event showed there was a commercial confidentiality.

"As for the Hello! defendants, their consciences were, in my view, tainted," the judge added. "They were not acting in good faith nor by way of fair dealing." He ruled that the celebrity couple was entitled to an injunction stopping further publication of the unauthorized photographs. *AFP*

Destiny TV holds summer events

DESTINY Cable is all set for the summer with a number of happenings and relevant causes for April and May.

Destiny supports the government's ongoing project, "Oplan Kalinga," and is the official cable TV and Internet provider of the said project, which takes place at the Presidential Action Center in Malacañang and the Ninoy Aquino Stadium.

Destiny also support the search for Miss Makati, May 27 at the Mandarin Oriental Hotel. The beauty pageant is a benefir for the makati Historical and Restoration Foundation.

For more information, log on to www.mydestiny.net or 841-9333.

INVASION OF PRIVACY LAWSUIT

Judge rules in favor of Douglas and Zeta-Jones

NO LOOKING BACK. But it is only partial victory for Zeta-Jones and Douglas in England, where traditionally there is no right to privacy.

LONDON—A judge in London ruled Friday in favor of Hollywood stars Michael Douglas and Catherine Zeta-Jones in their high-profile lawsuit against British gossip magazine Hello! over photos of their wedding.

The High Court in London ruled that Hello! had breached the couple's rights of confidence when it ran paparazzi snaps of their glittering November 2000 wedding at New York's Plaza Hotel.

But their victory was partial, as Justice John Lindsay concluded that they had no legal claim to invasion of privacy.

The couple have been seeking 500,000 pounds ($786,000) in damages from the magazine, but the final amount remains to be assessed at a further court hearing.

"We deeply appreciate that the court has recognized the principle that every individual has the right to be protected from excessive and unwanted media intrusion into their private lives," the couple said in a statement.

During several days of hearings, Zeta-Jones testified she felt "devastated, shocked and appalled" when she realized that paparazzi had gatecrashed the wedding, then sold their snaps to Hello!

The couple had already signed a 1-million pound deal with another gossip weekly, OK!, for exclusive coverage of the event, after turning down a higher offer from Hello!

Hello!'s owner Eduardo Sanchez Junco apologized to the couple in court, but argued that they were exaggerating the degree of distress that his magazine had caused to them.

OK! is separately suing Hello! for 1.75 million pounds.

Reacting to Friday's judgment, Hello! publishing director Sally Cartwright said nine out of the 13 specific claims that Douglas and Zeta-Jones had made against the magazine had been thrown out by the judge.

"The areas where he has found against us are, frankly, commercial ones," she said. "These rulings bear out what we have always said: that this

JUDGE/ A29

The stars' own private Calvary

DOLLY WOOD

Dolly Ann Carvajal

I GOT to chat with **Julius Babao**, who has been with ABS-CBN for many years, about the talk circulating that he would be moving to GMA-7 soon.

Julius was noncommittal about the issue. But being the gentleman that he always is, Julius didn't want to leave my question unanswered.

"For now, this much I can say," he said. "I am meeting with ABS-CBN management and soon enough I will be taking a new career path."

"Something new or something different?" I asked. Julius simply flashed an enigmatic grin. Whatever direction he is taking, no doubt his fiancée, **Tin-Tin Bersola**, and their followers will be cheering him on.

Faith, hope, love

SINCE it's Holy Week, allow me to veer away a bit from the usual show biz controversies and intrigues. It's no time to sensationalize issues.

In the spirit of *Semana Santa*, I asked some celebrities about the ultimate "Calvary" they have had to endure.

Korina Sanchez: "Last year, we were told there was no hope for my mother, who had a malignant tumor in her colon. All in my family believed the doctors except for myself. I had to rely on my own logic for my own prognosis of my mom. I researched through the Internet, made phone calls and read books for hope when everybody practically dissuaded me from cultivating faith. After a different diagnosis in New York, and after less than a year, my mom is declared tumor- cancer-free, even if a multitude tells me otherwise. Faith, hope and love can truly be the answer."

Bong Revilla: "The most trying time in my life was when I lost the Cavite election. I was so down that I thought I would not recover. But

THE STARS'/ A29

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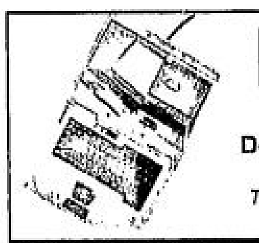

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RECONSIDERATION OF ERC DECISION

Meralco seeking higher rate increase

By Ronnel W. Domingo

BELEAGUERED Manila Electric Co. yesterday said it had asked the Energy Regulatory Commission to reconsider its decision on the unbundling of the utility's rates saying that the resulting rate increase was way below the level it was seeking.

The ERC's rate unbundling decision will result in a 22-centavo per kilowatt hour increase, or P1 lower than the P1.22 per kWh rate hike sought by Meralco.

Ivanna dela Peña, Meralco's chief of utility economics, said in a telephone interview that the motion for reconsideration filed by the utility on April 9 sought "clarifications on certain issues as well as reconsideration (of others)."

"These issues involve the treatment of the income tax, the allowed amount of weighted average capital and purchased power, other costs and the return on rate base (profitability indicator)," Dela Peña said.

Noting that the Supreme Court had disallowed the recovery of income tax from consumers, the Meralco executive said the filing with the ERC was drafted before the SC's decision was issued.

The Supreme Court's decision had also put Meralco in a quandary on how to refund customers about P28 billion in excess charges collected over the last nine years.

The ERC, in its March 21 decision, said Meralco's unbundled rates would result in an overall tariff increase of 5.4 centavos per kWh.

Unbundling means breaking up the power rates—as they appear in customers' monthly bills—into different components such as generation, transmission, distribution and supply charges. This allows the customers to know how much he is paying for the services he uses and electricity he consumes.

But in a subsequent statement, the quasi-judicial body said Meralco's new rates meant an average rate increase of 22 centavos per kWh.

"That is because, aside from the 5.4 centavos, we also have 7

MERALCO/B3

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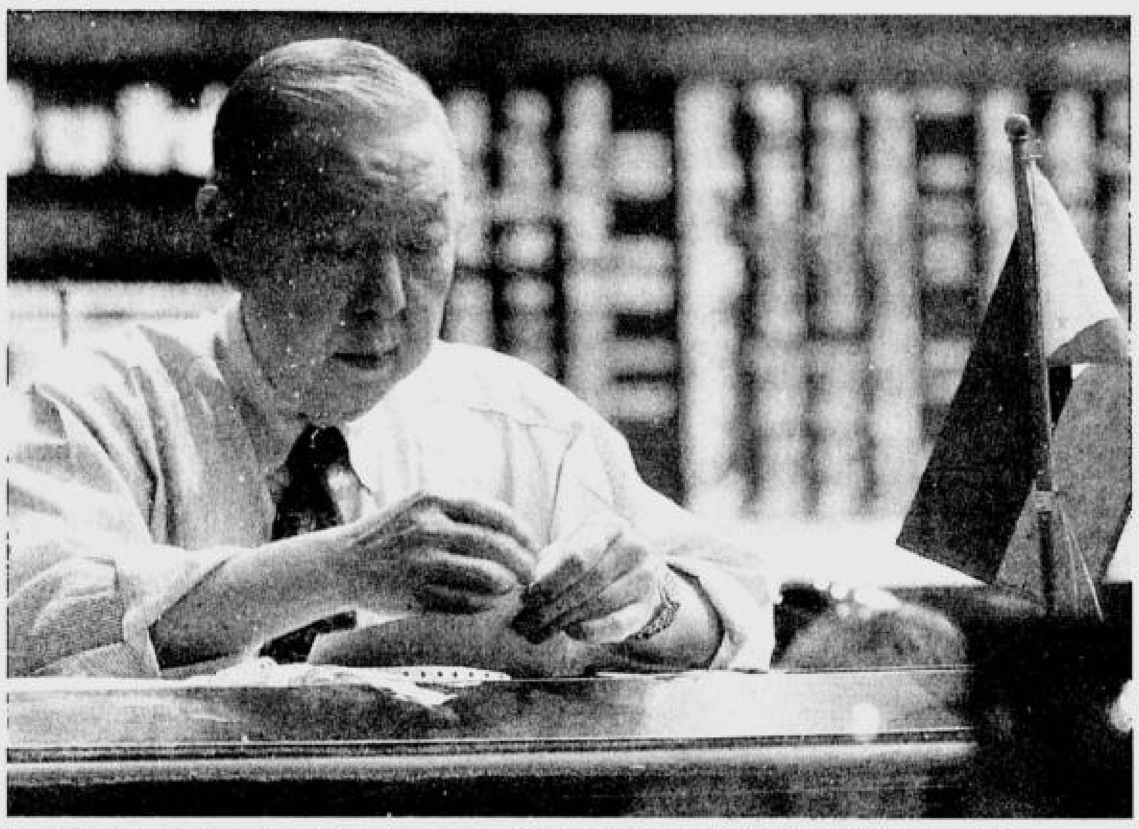
TOYOTA

Stocks up on bargain hunting

By Doris C. Dumlao



A TRADER sorts out documents at the close of trading at the Philippine Stock Exchange. The 30-company Philippine Stock Exchange Index rose 1 percent to 1,133.37 yesterday after gaining 9.74 points on Friday to 1,122.27.

AFP

SHARES closed higher yesterday for a third straight day to their highest level in nearly seven months as investors continued to scour for bargains, particularly among blue chip stocks.

The 30-company Philippine Stock Exchange Index rose 1 percent to 1,133.37 after gaining 9.74 points on Friday to 1,122.27.

Turnover fell to 272.73 million shares, while value rose to P401.8 million from 587.49 million shares worth P384.77 million.

"We continue to see follow-through buying," James Lago, research head at Westlink Global Equities Inc., told Dow Jones Newswires. "But there are signs that the market is nearing some resistance."

"We saw a continuation of last week's buying momentum since the market is coming from a very oversold level," said Joseph Roxas, president of Eagle Equities Inc.

"I'm looking at 1,150 as a resistance level for the market, at least for this week."

The Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co., which rose 4.6 percent to P397.50. led blue chips after the company disclosed plans to further trim its work force to reduce costs and improve efficiency. It also said it was seeking higher international call rates to increase revenue.

Analysts said despite an announcement of job cuts, the company was still expected to post improvements in earnings this year.

ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp. was up 6.8 percent to P15.75 after it reported on Friday a surge in its first-quarter net profit due to a recovery in advertising spending.

Construction firms EEI Corp. and DMCI Holdings advanced on expectations that they would land large contracts in the reconstruction of Iraq. EEI rose 12 percent to 56 centavos, while DMCI gained 11 percent at 26 centavos.

The Filipino Fund, an open-end fund, surged 49 percent to P2.24, as the company's market price still offered sharp discount to net asset value of P3.26.

Ayala Corp. added 10 centavos to P4.50, while unit Ayala Land Inc. was flat at P5.50.

Petron Corp. rose six 6 centavos to P2.12. *With reports from AP and AFP*

SIXTH YEAR IN A ROW

PSE suspends Fil-Estate over late disclosure

FOR six years in a row, Fil-Estate Land Inc. has been barred from trading its shares for its failure to submit its annual report on time.

In a memorandum, the Philippine Stock Exchange said it was suspending Fil-Estate for failing to submit 200 copies of its annual report for fiscal year ending Sept. 30, 2002.

The PSE also ordered Fil-Estate to pay basic and daily fines.

Stock market officials said trading of Fil-Estate shares would remain suspended until Fil-Estate had complied with the PSE's requirements.

The PSE charges a basic fine of P50,000 and another P5,000 for each day of delay in compliance.

Over the last six years, Fil-Estate has been blaming delays in the auditing of its balance sheets for its failure to submit its annual reports on time.

Fil-Estate struck earlier a deal with the Bases Conversion Development Authority on the restructuring of P1.1 billion in back rentals and fees.

The BCDA board agreed, in principle, with the Fil-Estate-owned Camp John Hay Development Corp. on a "mutually beneficial" agreement that would allow the government to collect the unpaid rentals and give the CJHDC more time to comply with its arrears.

The BCDA had thumbed down CJHDC's offer consisting of a P100-million cash upon signing of a restructuring deal, P200 million worth of finished cottages, P200 million worth of cottages set for construction, P200 million from the proceeds of CJHDC's deal with a prospective casino operator, and P155 million from the deposits made by CJHDC.

CJHDC, which won the right to develop and manage the former US military camp in Baguio City in 1996 after the Manuela group forfeited its bid, has amassed some P1.1 billion in back rentals and fees since 1999.

Fil-Estate was in danger of losing the project in which it had already pumped in more than P2 billion in investments after the BCDA board voted to terminate CJHDC's contract. The BCDA, however, chose not to serve the termination letter to CJHDC to give the firm another chance to improve its offer.

Doris C. Dumlao

Bank loans up 4.4% in February

BANKS are continuing to lend more, dumping cash on sectors keen on taking advantage of an apparent economic rebound.

Data released yesterday by the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas showed that bank lending grew for the sixth straight month in February, reversing a contraction a year earlier.

Banks lent over P1.46 trillion in February, 4.4 percent more than a year earlier and 1.5 percent higher than in January this year.

The central bank said most of the loans in February went to the farm sector, which accounted for 26 percent more than it did in February last year. The group of community, social and personal services came next with a lending growth rate of 18.2 percent. Loans to the manufacturing sector grew for the third consecutive month—by 10 percent in February—after 17 straight months of decline.

These three sectors accounted for 46 percent of the total outstanding loans of commercial banks as of February.

"The growth in bank lending, particularly in the manufacturing sector, is supported by improvements in domestic demand, such as the 4.9-percent rise in the volume of production index and the 16.1-percent expansion in the value of production index in January," BSP Deputy Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. said in a statement. *Clarissa S. Batino*

No problem with Ondeo keeping stake in Maynilad, Benpres says

BENPRES Holdings Corp. said yesterday it was "receptive" to a proposal by Ondeo Services Inc., its French partner in Maynilad Water Services Inc., to keep its stake in the beleaguered water concessionaire.

In a disclosure, Benpres chief finance officer Angel Ong informed the Philippine Stock Exchange, however, that talks on any compromise with state-owned Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System were still "exploratory" in nature.

"Benpres is receptive to a compromise solution and welcomes Ondeo 's proposal to increase its technical participation in managing the business of Maynilad," Ong said.

"Benpres' main objective is to protect its investment and manage its exposure in Maynilad going forward," he said.

It was earlier reported that Ondeo, formerly known as Suez Lyonnais des Eaux, presented a new business plan calling for a debt-for-equity swap that would cede 11 percent of Maynilad to the International Finance Corp., investment arm of the World Bank.

Ondeo, which intends to maintain its 48-percent stake in Maynilad, is also seeking a five-year moratorium on concession fee payments to the MWSS.

"In line with its balance sheet management plan, Benpres is committed . . . to continue to pursue the arbitration process, unless a mutually acceptable solution is reached between Maynilad and the MWSS," Ong said.

SEC seeks crackdown on checkbook abuse

By Elena R. Torrijos

THE SECURITIES and Exchange Commission and Bankers Association of the Philippines have agreed to ask the Anti-Money Laundering Council to consider any request for an unusually high number of checkbooks as a suspicious transaction.

"We'll discuss it. We have a meeting (today) to discuss revised rules of the AMLC," SEC Chair Lilia Bautista told reporters.

The SEC asked the BAP last month to stop releasing large amounts of checkbooks to new companies running operations that showed signs of an investment scam.

The commission also asked the BAP, the country's largest organization of commercial banks, to give it access to its "negative list" of names of people whose credit standing were in question.

The BAP responded last week with a proposal that any unusual number of checks ordered by a particular person, depending upon his or her business, should be a suspicious transaction that needs to be reported to AMLC.

ATI reports 25% growth in income

ASIAN Terminals Inc. said yesterday it posted a 25-percent growth in net income to P641 million in 2002 on "more efficient internal operations."

Revenues likewise surged 11 percent to P3.5 billion year-on-year, it said, while operating income grew 24 percent to P1.1 billion. Operating expenses rose by only 6 percent.

Cash flow indicator earnings before interest, tax, depreciation and amortization went up 10.6 percent to P1.5 billion.

ATI disclosed that it invested in expanding its facilities and reinforcing its fleet.

The company said it rehabilitated South Harbor Container Terminal's Pier 3 and built the Eva Macapagal Super Terminal.

Automated port procedures were also put in place to complement the expansion of its port facilities.

Particular attention was given to ATI's e-payment system for shippers, shipping lines and customs brokers over the WebTrack online cargo tracking system, it said.

Abigail L. Ho

DISCLOSURES

ELECTED directors of **A.Soriano Corp.** were Andres Soriano III, Eduardo Soriano, John Gokongwei Jr., Oscar Hilado, Warner GN Manning, Raymundo Pe, Enrique Razon Jr., Roberto Romulo and Antonio Roxas. The company also declared cash dividends of 5 centavos a share in favor of stockholders as of April 29 payable on May 23.

* *

PRUDENTIAL Bank will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on May 21, 4 p.m., with record date on March 31.

* * *

DIGITAL Telecommunications Philippines Inc. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on May 26, 10 a.m., at the Amorsolo Ballroom of the Manila Galleria Suites with record date on March 15.

* * *

BANKARD Inc. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on May 29 with record date on April 29.

* * *

EQUITABLE PCI Bank Inc. has announced the nomination of Ferdinand Martin Romualdez and Roberto Romulo as independent directors of the bank.

* * *

FIL-Estate Land Inc. has announced the appointment of Gilbert Reyes as its new corporate secretary.

* * *

BELLE Corp. has moved its annual stockholders' meeting from May 29 to June 25.

* * *

SINOPHIL Corp. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on June 25.

* * *

FIRST Philippine Holdings Corp. has moved its annual stockholders' meeting from May 19 to June 16. ***Compiled by Maricar D. Tolosa, PDI Research***

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of April 14, 2003)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	16	16.25	16	16.25	62,300
Bank of the Phil. Islands	36	36.5	36	36	290,800
Citystate Savings Bank	14.5	14.5	14.5	14.5	2,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	26.5	26.5	26.5	26.5	29,500
First E-Bank Corp.	0.55	0.6	0.55	0.6	170,000
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	28.5	29	28.5	28.5	201,000
Philippine National Bank	25.5	26	25	25	38,900
Phil. Savings Bank	26	26	26	26	2,000
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	10	10	10	10	1,000
Security Bank Corp.	10.75	10.75	10.75	10.75	4,300
Union Bank of the Phil.	17	17.25	17	17.25	.6,400
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
Bankard Inc.	1.44	1.48	1.42	1.46	545,000
First Abacus Financial	0.6	1	0.6	1	6,070,000
Filipino Fund Inc.	2.24	2.24	2.24	2.24	208,000
Manulife Financial Corp.	1300	1310	1300	1310	4,440
Sun Life Financial Serv.	1015	1035	1015	1035	1,150
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	15	15.75	15	15.75	58,000
Diversified Fin. Network	4	4	4	4	21,000
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	0.72	0.78	0.72	0.77	11,890,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	635	645	635	645	2,120
Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp.	3	3.3	3	3.25	30,000
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	0.37	0.41	0.37	0.38	2,920,000
Phil. Telegraph & Tel. Co.	0.22	0.22	0.22	0.22	90,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	380	397.5	380	397.5	390,210
Ivantage Corp.	0.41	0.48	0.41	0.45	2,370,000
Philweb Corp.	0.014	0.014	0.014	0.014	1,000,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. A	7.8	7.8	7.6	7.6	356,000
Manila Electric Co. B	11.5	11.5	11.25	11.25	568,800
Petron Corp.	2.06	2.12	2.06	2.12	6,334,000
Trans-Asia Oil And Energy	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95	350,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	1.44	1.52	1.44	1.5	2,157,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	2.55	2.65	2.55	2.6	835,000
Construction & Other Related Products					
Engineering Equip. Inc.	0.51	0.57	0.51	0.56	8,700,000
Union Cement Corp.	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	20,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	2.32	2.32	2.32	2.32	100,000
Jollibee Foods Corp.	16.75	16.75	16.5	16.75	698,600
RFM Corp.	0.78	0.78	0.78	0.78	150,000
San Miguel Corp. A	57.5	57.5	57.5	57.5	62,500
San Miguel Corp. B	67	67	67	67	21,700
Vitarich Corp.	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	110,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.35	0.35	0.34	0.34	70,000
Ayala Corp.	4.4	4.55	4.4	4.5	8,152,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	2.38	2.44	2.38	2.44	350,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.027	0.028	0.027	0.028	7,900,000
A. Soriano Corp.	0.65	0.65	0.65	0.65	30,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	1,000,000
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.15	0.15	0.15	0.15	150,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	0.23	0.245	0.23	0.235	3,090,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	0.235	0.27	0.235	0.27	13,690,000
Ever-Gotesco Resources	0.014	0.014	0.014	0.014	200,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	8.4	8.5	8.4	8.4	50,000
Ionics Inc.	0.74	0.74	0.73	0.73	220,000
J.G. Summit Holdings, Inc	1.54	1.58	1.54	1.58	467,000
Macroasia Corp.	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	100,000
Marsteel Cons. Inc. B	0.011	0.011	0.011	0.011	4,000,000
Megaworld Corp.	0.61	0.63	0.61	0.62	1,330,000
Multitech Inv. Corp.	0.3	0.34	0.3	0.34	550,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.19	0.21	0.19	0.21	13,910,000
Music Corp.	0.33	0.37	0.32	0.37	320,000
Philtread Holdings Corp.	2.3	2.3	2.3	2.3	24,000
East Asia Power Res. Corp.	0.04	0.04	0.04	0.04	200,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	0.76	0.76	0.76	0.76	100,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.065	0.08	0.065	0.08	2,400,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.37	0.37	0.35	0.35	350,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Corro-Coat Inc.	1.24	1.24	1.24	1.24	10,000
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	1.24	1.3	1.2	1.3	445,000
Primo Gaming Phils. Inc.	20	27	20	27	630,100
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICES					
Belle Corp.	0.33	0.34	0.33	0.33	2,330,000
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	200,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (Pdr)	14.5	15.75	14.5	15.5	208,200
Philweb Corp. - Warrants	0.0028	0.0028	0.0028	0.0028	4,000,000
OTHERS					
Centro Escolar University	6	7	6	7	15,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	5.5	5.7	5.5	5.5	6,859,000
Araneta Properties Inc.	0.14	0.14	0.14	0.14	100,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	1,710,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.17	0.18	0.17	0.175	3,700,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1	1.08	1	1.02	15,260,000
Highlands Prime Inc.	2.14	2.14	2.14	2.14	100,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.043	0.044	0.043	0.044	800,000
SM Development Corp.	1.16	1.2	1.16	1.2	170,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	5.2	5.3	5.2	5.3	5,674,000
MINING					
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	1.04	1.04	1.02	1.02	230,000
Dizon Copper Silver Mines	2	2.02	2	2.02	172,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.185	0.185	0.185	0.185	20,000
Omico Corp.	0.0048	0.0048	0.0046	0.0046	27,000,000
OIL					
Imperial Res.	0.014	0.014	0.014	0.014	3,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.003	0.0032	0.003	0.0032	75,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.0032	0.0034	0.0032	0.0034	12,000,000
Pacifica	0.011	0.011	0.011	0.011	7,000,000
South China Resources Inc.	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	20,000

	SHARES	VALUE(P)
Bank & Fin Svc	7,636,790	32,791,095.00
Comm'l & Ind'l	105,726,230	282,251,290.00
PRO	34,373,000	85,474,750.00
Mining	27,422,000	709,300.00
OIL	97,020,000	394,400.00
GRAND TOTALS:	272,178,020	401,620,835.00
	AVERAGES	
Bank & Fin Svc	370.46	DOWN 0.15
Comm'l & Ind'l	1,658.55	UP 25.12
PRO	486.51	UP 1.59
Mining	1,150.67	DOWN 0.59
OIL	1.32	UP 0.18
All Shares Index	682.31	UP 4.07
Composite	1,133.37	UP 11.10

CURRENCIES

April 14, 2003 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.929541	1.000000	52.436000
Japan	Yen	0.007720	0.008305	0.435500
United Kingdom	Pound	1.461052	1.571800	82.418900
Hongkong	Dollar	0.119184	0.128218	6.723200
Switzerland	Franc	0.667534	0.718133	37.656000
Canada	Dollar	0.640136	0.688658	36.110500
Singapore	Dollar	0.522184	0.561766	29.456800
Australia	Dollar	0.561996	0.604595	31.702500
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.465757	2.652661	139.094900
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.247878	0.266667	13.983000
Brunei	Dollar	0.520722	0.560193	29.374300
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000105	0.000113	0.005900
Thailand	Baht	0.021628	0.023267	1.220000
UAE	Dirham	0.253088	0.272272	14.276900
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.075800	56.410600
Argentina	Peso	0.321641	0.346021	18.144000
Brazil	REAL	0.288766	0.310655	16.289500
Denmark	Kroner	0.134660	0.144867	7.596200
India	Rupee	0.019661	0.021151	1.109100
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.244649	0.263193	13.800800
Mexico	New Peso	0.087502	0.094135	4.936100
New Zealand	Dollar	0.506700	0.545108	28.583300
Norway	Kroner	0.127052	0.136683	7.167100
Pakistan	Rupee	0.016104	0.017325	0.908500
South Africa	Rand	0.119671	0.128742	6.750700
Korea	Won	0.000756	0.000813	0.042600
Sweden	Kroner	0.109244	0.117525	6.162500
Syria	Pound	0.022132	0.023810	1.248500
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.026803	0.028835	1.512000
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.000583	0.000627	0.032900

INTEREST RATES

April 8, 2003—MART 1 Rates

Benchmark Interest Rates	MART1 April 8, 2003 (%)	MART1 April 4, 2003 (%)
1 Month	8.0288	7.9496
3 Months	7.9558	8.3135
6 Months	8.7019	8.9333
1 Year	9.5115	9.5462
2 Years	10.5923	10.5885
3 Years	11.5788	11.5788
4 Years	12.4538	12.4212
5 Years	12.6154	12.6096
7 Years	13.1519	13.1654
10 Years	13.2250	13.2308
20 Years	13.4865	13.4769
25 Years	14.0135	14.0346

SOURCE: MART/BLOOMBERG

GTEB investigating surge in pants exports to EU

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

THE GARMENTS and Textile Export Board (GTEB) is investigating a recent spike in the exportation of pants on suspicion that overseas apparel makers are using the Philippines as a transshipment point to penetrate Europe.

Trade and Industry Secretary and GTEB chair Manuel A. Roxas II said initial investigations showed that a number of companies that tallied "abnormally high" exports of pants to Europe in February and March this year had no production operations.

The GTEB reported that exports of pants or trousers from February to March jumped 125 percent to $54.97 million from $24.39 million during the same period last year.

Roxas said this could mean that apparel makers in other countries have been taking advantage of the Philippines' export quota allocation in the European Union. The overseas apparel makers send their finished goods to the country and ship them as Philippine-made pants to Europe using unscrupulous brokers and fabricated documents.

Roxas said the illegal transshipment of garments and textile was detrimental to the Philippines because it had reduced the work and income opportunities for Filipinos. The EU accounted for an estimated 12 percent of the country's $3 billion worth of garments and textile exports yearly.

Roxas said trade and industry authorities in the EU had also reported an increase in fraudulent exports and other irregularities arising from the illegal transshipment of garments and textile from volume producers to under-performing quota holders.

An EU report said: "Certain groups are taking advantage of the quota system to make money illegally that prompted regulatory agencies around the world to work together in stopping these activities."

Business backs BIR drive

BUSINESSMEN have expressed their full support to the Bureau of Internal Revenue's shop-by-shop tax mapping drive in Metro Manila and proposed that the program be expanded to cover the provinces.

Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry executive director Florecita Flores said the group had told the BIR that it had no complaints about the on-going tax mapping drive even after a string of well-known commercial establishments have been found violating the agency's tax rules.

The tax mapping drive, which started March 28, unearthed a number of violations routinely made by top establishments such as the lack of registration papers, registered book of accounts, sales invoices and failure to register.

"We're happy with the way the BIR has conducted the tax mapping drive which we hope would not end up as ningas cogon," Flores said.

Flores noted that the BIR had exceeded its P93-billion revenue target for the first quarter this year largely due to the tax mapping drive.

Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

91-day T-bill yield hits 7.46%

By Clarissa S. Batino

THE BENCHMARK 91-day treasury bill yield rose by 31.5 basis points to 7.46 percent.

National Treasurer Sergio Edeza said the increase was partly due to the inclusion of the 10-percent Value-Added Tax on the banks' bids.

Edeza warned that if the confusion over the VAT application would persist, domestic interest rates would continue to increase at the expense of the economy.

"We will withhold 6 percent of the VAT payment and remit the amount to the BIR (Bureau of Internal Revenue)," he said.

Banks use the 91-day rate as well as the central bank's overnight rates as basis in pricing their loans and deposits.

The auction committee led by the Bureau of Treasury accepted offers for the 91-bill debt papers but rejected all bids for the 182-day and 364-day T-bills due to lack of volume. Bids for the 182-day and 364-day bills reached only P876 million and P1.67 billion, respectively, against tenders of P3 billion and P2.5 billion.

Bids for the 91-day bill reached P5.165 billion, or more than the P4 billion in tenders. Aside from the offered rate, the Treasury also considers the volume of the bids in deciding whether to accept or to reject the offers.

The government's low cash position of P30 billion, from P38 billion the previous week, was also considered.

Meralco seeks . . .

From page B1

centavos for the currency exchange rate adjustment and 8.75 centavos for the recovery of the deferred PPA (purchased power adjustment)," Dela Peña said.

Amounting to P5.78 billion, Meralco's deferred PPA was accumulated from 2000 to 2001, when the utility charged customers at levels less than the actual costs it incurred in buying electricity from its independent power producers.

Meralco's IPPs include First Gas Power Corp., FGP Corp. and Quezon Power Philippines Ltd.

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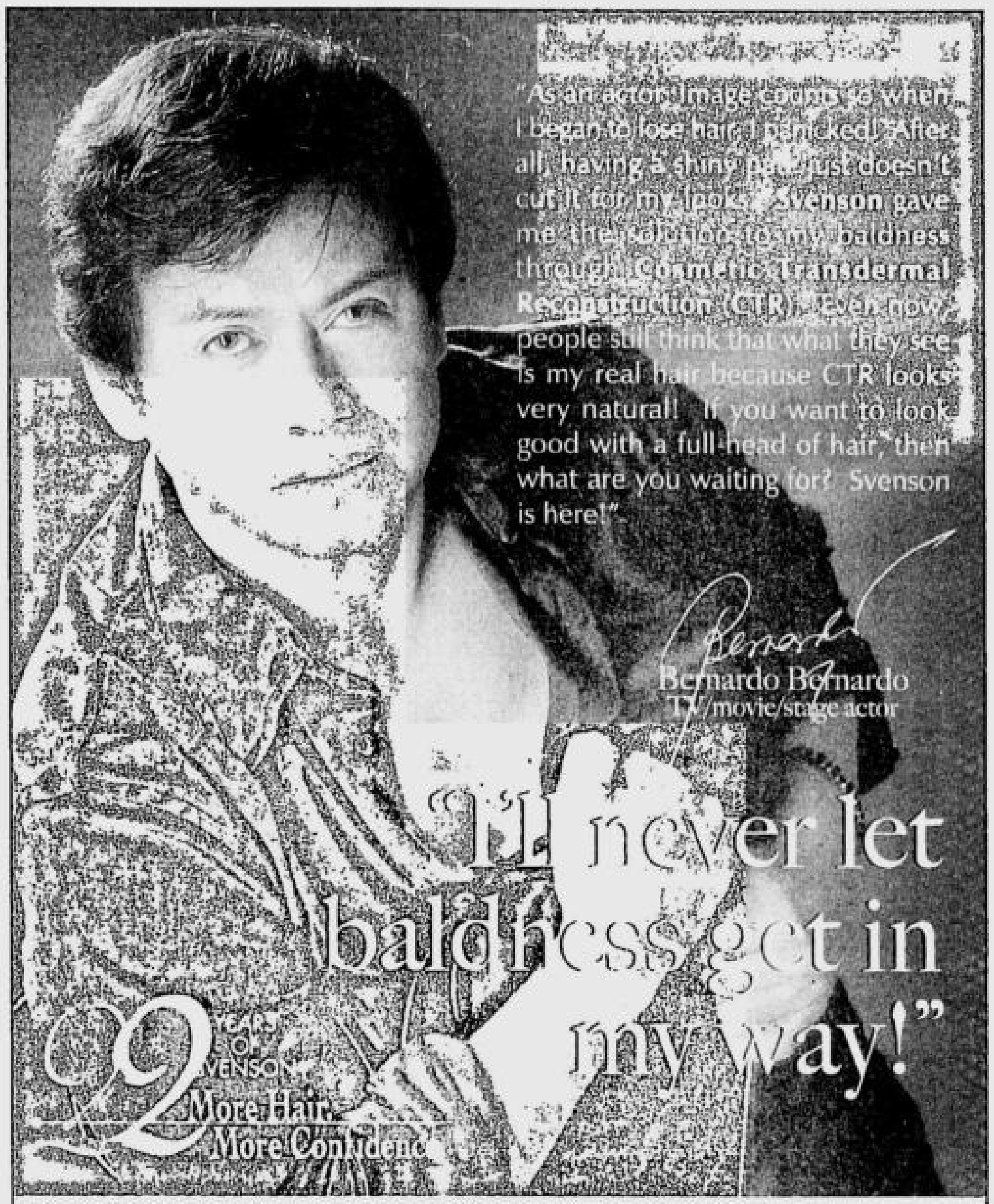
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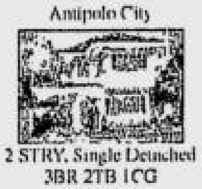

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PUBLIC NOTICES

LEGAL NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that the estate of the late BENJAMIN C. DAVID was the subject of self-adjudication by his sole heir MARTINA I. DAVID as per Document No. 96, Page 21, Book I, Series of 2003 executed before Notary Public Atty. Reginaldo L. Hernandez (PDI-April 15, 22 & 29, 2003)

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ANNOUNCEMENT

In observance of the Holy Week, our Branch Offices will be closed Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Black Saturday.

Main Office (Pasong Tamo) and Megamall Branch (Ortigas) resume office on Easter Sunday.

OFWNet

presents

The Overseas Filipinos Worldwide (OFW) Conference & Trade Exhibit

Theme: 'Overseas Filipinos Worldwide: The New Economic and Political Force'
May 23-25, 2003
Hall 3, SM Megatrade, Mandaluyong City, Philippines

HIGHLIGHT OF ACTIVITIES
- 3-day conference for Overseas Filipinos Worldwide
- 3-day trade exhibit showcasing business opportunities and investments for overseas Filipinos and their families
- Business matching and presentations of exhibiting companies
- Socials and fellowship night of overseas Filipinos
- City tours for overseas Filipinos

Reserve your exhibit booth spaces and register NOW!

CONFERENCE PROGRAM

DAY 1, May 23, 2003 --- Focused on OFW Contribution to Philippine Society
10:00am - 5:00pm

- Registration
- Welcome Remarks
- Keynote Address
- **Topic 1:** The Overseas Filipinos in Nation Building --- Impact on Philippine Economy
- **Topic 2:** The Overseas Filipinos in Nation Building --- Impact on Society, Culture, Politics and Family
- **Topic 3:** What the Overseas Filipinos and the Government should and can do to enhance the former's contribution to the Philippine economy
- Position Paper Presentations of Conference Delegates (1 for each country represented)
- Conference Resolutions
- Cocktails/Socials for Overseas Filipinos

DAY 2, May 24, 2003 --- Focused on Business & Economics
10:00am- 5:00pm

- Registration
- Program for Overseas Filipinos by DOLE
- Business Opportunities for Overseas Filipinos/ SMEs by DTI
- Technology Assistance to Overseas Filipinos/ SMEs by TLRC
- Sources of Funds for Overseas/ SMEs by Landbank of the Philippines, Development Bank of the Philippines, Small Business Guarantee Fund Corp., OWWA
- Entrepreneurship Seminar for Overseas Filipinos
- Business Presentations of Trade Exhibitors (Franchising, Retail Trade, Service Industries, Insurance/Pre-need Plan, Real Estate, Food Processing, Handicrafts, IT Education & Training, Agro-industrial)
- Cocktails/Socials for Overseas Filipinos

DAY 3, May 25, 2003 — Focused on Government Programs for Overseas Filipinos
10:00am- 5:00pm

- Registration
- OFW Reintegration Program by DOLE
- The Role of OWWA in the Economic Development of OFWs
- The Role of POEA in the Economic Development of OFWs
- The Role of DFA in the Economic Development of OFs
- Parallel Sessions
  - How to Start a Business
  - Marketing Your Business / Product
  - Project / Business Financing
  - Do's and Dont's of Investments
  - Crisis Management for SMEs
  - Simple Budgeting & Accounting
- Special Presentation of the 2004 Presidentiables (Topic/ Question: If you are to become the President, what will be your program for overseas Filipinos?)
- Cocktails/ Socials for Overseas Filipinos

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TransCo

National Transmission Corporation

INVITATION FOR BIDS

Date: March 28, 2003
LOAN NO.: MIYAZAWA
CONTRACT NO.: Sp00.SMSRTL.Lw.-0304

1. The ***National Power Corporation (NPC)*** has received a loan from the ***Miyazawa Funds*** in Japanese Yen currency, and it is intended that part of the proceeds of this loan will be applied to eligible payments under the contract for ***Furnishing, Delivery of Transmission Line Materials and Construction of San Manuel - San Roque 230kV DC/ST Transmission Line Project on Turn Key Basis.***
2. The ***National Transmission Corporation (TRANSCO)***, administering the implementation of the said project, now invites sealed bids from eligible bidders for Furnishing, Delivery of Transmission Line Materials and Construction of San Manuel - San Roque 230kV DC/ST Transmission Line Project On Turnkey Basis (Sp00.SMSRTL.Lw-0304).
3. Bidders may obtain further information from and inspect and acquire the bidding documents at the ***Office of the Manager, Bids and Contracts Management Department, 2nd Floor, Building 2, National Transmission Corporation, Agham Road corner Quezon Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City (Zip Code 1104), Philippines, Tel. No.: 922-0401, Fax No.: 921-2308.***
4. A complete set of bidding documents may be purchased by interested eligible bidders starting **April 4, 2003** upon submission of a written application to the above office, and upon payment of a non-refundable fee of ***ten thousand pesos (Php 10,000.00).***
5. A two-envelope bidding procedure will be adopted. Bidders are to submit simultaneously two (2)-sealed envelopes, one (1) containing the technical proposal and one (1) containing the price proposal. Initially only the technical proposals are opened. Technical proposals which are submitted by non-qualified bidders or which are not substantially responsive are rejected. The substantially responsive technical proposals that have been submitted by qualified bidders are discussed with the bidders and the bidders are requested for full compliance to the specification. If the bidders deem necessary, he may submit a supplementary price proposal that only contain the changes in price resulting from the changes in the technical proposal. The original price proposal and the supplementary price proposal are opened simultaneously in public.
6. All bids must be accompanied by a bid security of ***Sixty Six Thousand and Two Hundred Fifty US Dollars ($66,250.00).*** The bid security must be included with the technical proposal. The deadline for the submission bids will be on ***June 4, 2003 at 1:30 p.m.*** at the aforementioned address. Late submission will be rejected.
7. The technical proposals will be opened immediately thereafter in the presence of bidder's representatives who choose to attend.
8. The price proposals will be opened in the presence of the bidder's representatives who choose to attend at the time and date and at the address to be advised by the Employer after approval of the evaluation of the technical proposals.
9. TRANSCO reserves the right to reject any or all Bids without offering any reasons, waive any required formality therein and to make an award to the bidder whose proposal is most advantageous to the government.
10. All communications should be addressed to the undersigned at the aforementioned address.

(Sgd.) WINIFREDO SM. PANGILINAN
Chairman
Bids Award Committee

(PDI - Apr. 12, 13, 15 & 20, 2003)

TransCo

National Transmission Corporation

INVITATION FOR BIDS

Date: March 28, 2003
LOAN NO.: MIYAZAWA
CONTRACT NO.: Sp02.CMIP.Vw-0358

1. The ***National Power Corporation (NPC)*** has received a loan from the ***Miyazawa Funds*** for ***Cebu-Mactan Interconnection Project*** and it is intended that part of the proceeds of this loan will be applied to eligible payments under the contract ***Design, Furnishing, Installing, Testing and Commissioning (Turn-key Basis) GIS Substation including Protection & Communication Systems and Underground Power & Fiber Optic Cables.***
2. The ***National Transmission Corporation (TRANSCO)*** administering the implementation of the said project, now invites sealed bids from eligible bidders for the:

   Schedule I - Design, Furnishing, Installing, Testing and Commissioning (Turn-key Basis) 138/69 kV GIS & Conventional Outdoor Substation Equipment including Protection & Communication Systems for Mandaue S/S, Mactan S/S & Banilad S/S Expansion

   Schedule II - Design, Furnishing, Installing, Testing and Commissioning (Turn-key Basis) 138 kV Underground XLPE Power Cables & Fiber Optic Cables
3. Bidders may obtain further information from and inspect and acquire the bidding documents at the ***Office of the Manager, Bids and Contracts Management Department, 2nd Floor, Building 2, Power Center, Quezon Avenue corner BIR Road, Diliman, Quezon City (Zip Code 1104), Philippines, Tel./Fax Number: 921-2308.***
4. A complete set of bidding documents may be purchased by interested eligible bidders starting March 28, 2003 upon submission of a written application to the above office, and upon payment of a non-refundable fee of ***fifty-five thousand pesos (Php 55,000.00).***
5. A two-envelope bidding procedure will be adopted. Bidders are to submit simultaneously two (2)-sealed envelopes, one (1) containing the technical proposal and one (1) containing the price proposal. Initially only the technical proposals are opened. Technical proposals which are submitted by non-qualified bidders or which are not substantially responsive are rejected. The substantially responsive technical proposals that have been submitted by qualified bidders are discussed with the bidders and the bidders are requested for full compliance. The bidders may or may not submit a supplementary price proposal, which contain the changes in price resulting from the discussed changes in the technical proposals. The original price proposal and the supplementary price proposal are opened simultaneously in public.
6. All bids must be accompanied by a bid security of:

   Schedule I - Three Hundred Seventy Four Thousand Three Hundred Twenty US dollars (US$374,320)

   Schedule II - Two Hundred Sixty Thousand and Forty US dollars (US$260,040)

   The bid security must be included with the technical proposal.

   The deadline for the submission of bids will be on July 15, 2003 at 1:30 p.m. at the aforementioned address. Late submissions will be rejected
7. The technical proposals together with the bid security will be opened immediately thereafter in the presence of bidder's representatives who choose to attend.
8. The price proposals will be opened in the presence of the bidder's representatives who choose to attend at the time and date and at the address to be advised by the Employer after approval of the evaluation of the technical proposals.
9. The total contract duration for each schedule is 540 calendar days
10. TRANSCO reserves the right to reject any or all Bids without offering any reasons, waive any required formality therein and to make an award to the bidder whose proposal is most advantageous to the government
11. All communications should be addressed to the undersigned at the aforementioned address.

(Sgd.) WINIFREDO SM. PANGILINAN
Chairman
Bids Award Committee

(PDI - Apr. 12, 13 & 15, 2003)

Republic of the Philippines
Department of Health
CENTRAL OFFICE BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE
Office of the Secretary

INVITATION FOR BIDS

IFB No. ICHSP-2003-005HE

1 The Government of the Philippines has received a loan from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) toward the cost of Integrated Community Health Services Project, and it intends to apply part of the proceeds of this loan to payments under the contract for the Supply and Delivery of Additional Hospital Equipment for the Kalinga Provincial Hospital, Lubuagan District Hospital and Guimaras Provincial Hospital.

2. The Department of Health, now invites sealed bids from eligible bidders for the supply and delivery of hospital equipment described as follows:

Item No.	Description	Quantity
1.	Emergency Room Table	1
2.	Delivery Room Table with accessories	1
3.	Stretcher	1
4.	Wheelchair	1
5.	EENT Set	1
6.	Stethoscope, Adult	3
7.	Stethoscope, Pedia	3
8.	BP Apparatus, Pedia	3
9.	Laryngoscope	2
10.	Delivery Instrument Set	1
11.	Wheeled Trolley Bed	1
12.	Urinals	10
13.	Bed Pan	10
14.	IV Stand	10
15.	Dressing Tray Carriage	2
16.	Resuscitator, Pedia	1
17.	Resuscitator, Adult	1
18.	Refrigerator (Dietary use)	1
19.	Automatic Tissue Processor	1
20.	Automatic Slide Stainer	1
21.	Rotary Microtome	1
22.	Tissue Embedding Unit	1
23.	Microwave Staining Oven	1
24.	Tissue Oven	1
25.	Laboratory Incubator	1
26.	Automatic Hematology Analyser	1
27.	Volume Respirator	1
28.	Blood Gas Analyzer	1
29.	Cardiac Monitor/Defibrillator	1
30.	Emergency Cart	1
31.	Dental Chair, Hydraulic	1
32.	ICU Bed with Side Rails	3
33.	Diagnostic Set (Opthalmoscope/Otoscope)	1
34.	Food Trolley	1

3 The schedule of bid activities are as follows

Activity	Date	Time	Venue
Issuance of Bid Documents	April 21 to May 15, 2003	8:00 A.M.-5:00 P.M.	COBAC Secretariat, Procurement and Logistics Service, Bldg. 26, San Lazaro Compound, DOH
Pre-Bid Conference	May 2, 2003	9:00 A.M.	Materials Management Division Conference Room, Bldg. 25, San Lazaro Compound, DOH
Deadline for Submission of Bids	May 19, 2003	9:00 A.M.	
Opening of Bids	May 19, 2003	9:01 A.M.	

4 International Shopping will be conducted in accordance with ADB's procurement guidelines and is open to all Bidders from eligible source countries.

5 Interested eligible Bidders may obtain further information from the inspect the Bidding Document as COBAC Secretariat, Procurement and Logistics Service, Bldg. 26, San Lazaro Compound, Department of Health, Sta. Cruz, Manila

6 The Bidding Document, in the English language, may be purchased by interested Bidders at the address above or on submission of a written application to the address above and upon payment of a non-refundable fee of FIVE THOUSAND PESOS (P5,000.00) in cash or ONE HUNDRED DOLLARS (US$100.00) plus mailing fee of US$50 in the form of bank draft. Documents for overseas delivery shall be sent by surface mail or courier. No liability will be accepted for loss or late delivery.

All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid Security in the amount of not less than two Percent (2%) of the Total Bid Price, Prior to the Bid Opening, a Pre-Bid Conference will be held on the scheduled date at the address above

8 The Department of Health will not be responsible for any costs or expenses incurred by Bidders in connection with the preparation or delivery of Bids

9 In the comparison of Bids, ADB's Domestic Preference scheme will be applied in accordance with the provisions stipulated in the Instruction to Bidders

10 The Department of Health reserves the right to reject any or all bids without disclosing any reason, to waive any minor defects or infirmities therein and to accept such bid as may be considered advantageous to the DOH and to local health units.

(Sgd.) ZENAIDA O. LUDOVICE, MD, MPH
Assistant Secretary
Chairperson, COBAC

(PDI - April 15 & 20, 2003)

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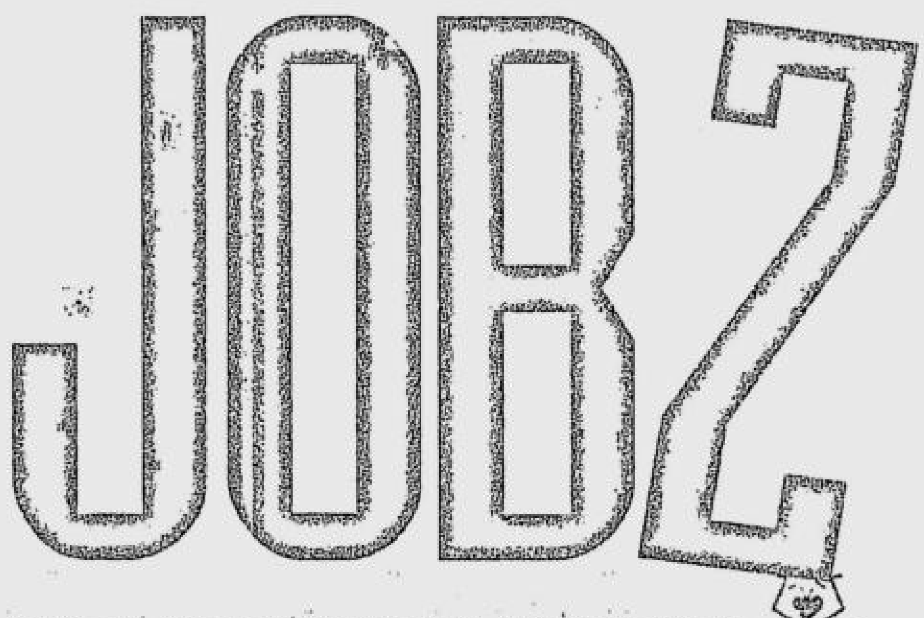

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INVITATION FOR BID

IFB No. GOP/03-DSWD-002

The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), a national government agency, through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), is inviting duly accredited Health Maintenance Organizations (HMO) to apply for eligibility and to bid for the PROVISION OF HEALTHCARE SERVICES FOR DSWD EMPLOYEES NATIONWIDE THROUGH A HEALTH CARD SYSTEM.

2 For the purpose of this bid, eligible bidders shall be those who have accredited hospital and clinics in ALL regions of the country.

Interested eligible bidders may obtain further information from ***Ms. Maricris Jacinto***, BAC Secretariat Property and Supply Division, 2nd Floor, DSWD, Batasan Pambansa Complex, Constitution Hills, Quezon City with telephone nos. (632) 931-8161 (632) 931-8101 to 07 local 125, and fax no. (632) 931-6146.

A complete set of bidding documents may be purchased by interested bidders upon submission of a letter of intent and upon payment of a non-refundable fee of Two Thousand Pesos (P2,000.00)

5 A Pre-Bid Conference is scheduled on **April 30, 2003 at 2:00 p.m.** to be held at the **Administrative Conference Room**, 2nd Floor, DSWD, Constitution Hills, Quezon City

6. Sealed application for eligibility and bid proposal, together with the bid security, must be delivered to the BAC Secretariat on or before **10:00 a.m. of May 21, 2003.** Thereafter, eligibility and bid envelopes will be opened in the presence of the bidder's representative(s) who choose to attend. Opening of bids will be held at the **Administrative Conference Room**, 2nd Floor, DSWD, Constitution Hills, Quezon City. Late bids will not be accepted.

DSWD hereby reserves the right to reject any or all applications for eligibility and to bid, to waive any formality therein and/or accept the bid as maybe considered most advantageous to the government.

(Sgd.) RHODA F. YAP
Assistant Secretary and Chairperson,
Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI - Apr. 15 & 22, 2003)

BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE
ARMED FORCES OF THE PHILIPPINES LOGISTICS CENTER
Camp General Emilio Aguinaldo, Quezon City

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Armed Forces of the Philippines Logistics Center Bids and Awards Committee invites all interested suppliers, manufacturers and dealers of various firepower items to Apply for Eligibility and to Bid for the **SUPPLY AND DELIVERY OF VARIOUS FIREPOWER ITEMS** for the AFP with an approved budget of One Hundred Ninety Five Million Nine Hundred Thirty Eight Thousand Six Hundred Pesos (Php 195,938,600.00) chargeable against the FY 2003 AFP Budget.

All interested parties are invited to attend the Pre-Bid Conference that will be held on **09 May 2003 at 10:00 o'clock a.m. at Daza Park Pavilion, AFP Logistics Center, Camp General Emilio Aguinaldo, Quezon City.**

Tender Documents shall be available during office hours starting **21 April 2003** at Procurement Unit, AFP Logistics Center, Camp General Emilio Aguinaldo, Quezon City.

A Special Power of Attorney, issued by the prospective bidder authorizing its representative to purchase the bid documents in its behalf, shall be required before issuance of the Tender Documents.

The bidders shall submit their duly accomplished eligibility requirements, technical and financial proposals in three (3) separate sealed envelopes at the bid box located at the AFPLC BAC Secretariat at Daza Park Pavilion, AFP Logistics Center, Camp General Emilio Aguinaldo, Quezon City. Submission of the envelopes shall be from 8:30 a.m. to 10:00 o'clock a.m. on **23 May 2003**, after which the opening of bids shall immediately follow.

The AFP Logistics Center reserves the right to reject any or all bids without offering any reason, to waive any formality or technicality, and to award to any bidder whose proposal is deemed most advantageous to the AFP. The AFP Logistics Center likewise assumes no obligation for whatever expenses or losses that may be incurred by the bidders in the preparation of the bids, nor does it guarantee that the award shall be made.

For more information, please call the AFPLC BAC Secretariat at telephone nos. 913-1175 or 911-6001 loc 5434, or visit our website at www.logcen.com.

(Sgd.) REYNALDO S. RAMIREZ
Colonel PAF (GSC)
Chairman, AFPLC BAC

(PDI - April 15, & 22, 2003)

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U.P. College of Medicine, 1944

*Peacefully died in the Grace of our Lord at the age of 83, joining her spouse **Filadelfo** (✞).*

Her bereaved family, siblings **Teresita P. Sta. Maria, Ricardo L. Pronove Jr.** and **Aida P. Cavosora**, nieces, nephews, cousins and relatives request her many friends to remember her in their prayers.

Her cremated remains lie in state at the Christ the King Parish Church, Greenmeadows, Quezon City where her memorial will be held on Holy Wednesday, April 16, 2003 at 4:00 p.m. Another memorial service will be held on Easter Sunday, April 20, 2003 at 9:00 a.m. at the R.A. Pronove Elementary School, Magdalena, Laguna.

Instead of flowers, donations may be made to the Dolores A. Laico-Pronove (DALP) Foundation which she founded.

REGINO CHENG COKIENG

Died peacefully on April 12, 2003 at the age of 44.

His loving wife **Zennie**; and daughters **Regine** and **Chiara**; mother, brothers, sisters, nephews, nieces and other relatives request the readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at La Funeraria Paz (Chapel A) at 143 G. Araneta Avenue cor. Kaliraya St., Quezon City.

His remains will be cremated on Thursday, April 17, 2003, 12:30 nn at La Funeraria Paz Crematory.

Message of Thanks

The Family of the Late

Severino C. Lapuz

Who peacefully joined his Creator on March 30, 2003

Acknowledges with sincere appreciation and heartfelt gratitude, all those who offered prayers and Masses, sent flowers and messages of sympathy, spoken and unspoken, both here and abroad, visited and kept vigil in the hour of our grief and sorrow and have extended their support and services in so many ways.

We thank you for all the comfort you have shared with us during our time of bereavement. We will always cherish them with all our hearts and minds.

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life." John 3:16

An obituary with a picture can be a fitting tribute to your departed loved one.

Always caring...
INQUIRER OBITUARIES

OBITUARY REQUIREMENTS:
❶ Copy of Death Certificate
❷ Any identification document (I.D.)

DEATH ANNOUNCEMENT • MESSAGE OF THANKS
DEATH ANNIVERSARY • REQUIEMS
FREE OBIT DESIGN

"Behold my servant whom I have chosen my beloved in whom I delight". *Matthew 12:18*

MARIANO F. ANGELES

Passed away in the Grace of the Lord on April 14, 2003 at the age of 77.

His beloved wife **Amelia Angeles**; children **Cecille & Caloy de Jesus, Boy & Susan Angeles, Vic & Irene, Linnet & George Lu, Juancho & Aida Angeles, Mario & Bernadette, Francis & Jojo** and grandchildren request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His body lies in state at Tanguile Room, La Funeraria Paz, Sucat, Parañaque.

Cremation will be at the Manila Memorial Crematorium on Thursday, April 17, 2003 at 3:00 p.m.

Message of Thanks

Our heartfelt gratitude to those who offered Masses and prayers, sent flowers, cards and messages of sympathy, visited and kept vigil, attended the funeral rites and who in countless ways helped and comforted us during our moments of bereavement over our beloved

CATHERINA FREDERIKA "IKKI" MORANDI

Who passed away on April 09, 2003

From her parents **Umberto** and **Liza Uyboco Morandi** and her brother **Christopher Raymond**.

CLASSIFIEDS

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
PRESIDENTIAL COMMISION ON
GOOD GOVERNMENT
IRC Building # 82 EDSA
Mandaluyong City

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Presidential Commission on Good Government (PCGG), invites interested parties to participate in the sealed bidding for the lease of the ground floor of the People's Center and Library located at Real St., Tacloban City, as venue for "Summer Trade Exhibit" from May 15, 2003 to July 15, 2003.

The bidding guidelines will be available at the Asset Management Department Presidential Commission on Good Government, 3rd Floor, IRC Building #82 EDSA, Mandaluyong City and at the PCGG, Nipa Hut, Jones St., Tacloban City, starting April 8, 2003. For inquiries, please contact Darwin C. Altea at Telephone No. 726-0034 and Renor O. Dauag at Telephone No. (053) 321-3413.

Pre-qualification requirements should be submitted on or before April 29, 2003, while bids will be received, opened and tabulated at 10:00 A.M. May 2, 2003 in the presence of the bidders at the PCGG, Asset Management Department, 3rd Floor, IRC Building, #82 EDSA, Mandaluyong City.

(Sgd.) **RENOR O. DAUAG**
Regional Representative

(PDI-- April 15, 21 & 28, 2003)

Republic of the Philippines
NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY
National Capital Region
U.N. Avenue, Manila

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The National Food Authority, National Capital Region, U.N. Avenue, Paco, Manila invites all interested qualified Cargo Handling Services Contractors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the provision of Integrated Cargo Handling Services (Vessel-to-door delivery) in the discharging of 170,000 MT, more or less of NFA imported rice at the South/North Harbor, Port of Manila.

The schedule of bidding activities are as follows:

	DATE	TIME
1. Issuance of Bid Document/Forms	- April 21 to 25, 2003	8 AM-5 PM
2. Pre-Bidding Conference	- April 25, 2003	10:00 AM
3. Bidding Proper	- May 12, 2003	2:00 PM

Bid Documents/Forms, Terms and Conditions, List of Requirements may be secured at the Office of the Assistant Regional Director, NFA-NCR U.N. Avenue, Paco, Manila upon payment of a non-refundable fee of P3,000.00 starting **April 21, 2003 to April 25, 2003** from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM.

Other Inquiries may be addressed to the Office of the Assistant Regional Director, at the above address with telephone numbers 563-94-54 and 564-20-71 to 74 local 123.

The National Food Authority reserves the right to reject any or all bids, to waive any informalities or defects found therein, and to accept only such bids as are advantageous to the Agency.

(Sgd.) **ATTY. BASILIDES TACO**
Assistant Regional Director
Chairman, Bidding Committee

(PDI – April 15 & 22, 2003)

Republic of the Philippines
Department of Environment and Natural Resources
ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT BUREAU
NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION
Congressional Plaza Bldg., No. 51 Congressional Ave., Proj. 8, Quezon City
Telephone Nos. 925-63-96; 453-88-14; 925-63-97
Fax No. 925-63-96

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

On the **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT** (EIA) of the proposed **SKYCITY PROJECT** of **E. GANZON, INC.** to be located at EDSA cor Ortigas Avenue, Mandaluyong City, Metro Manila.

Notice is hereby given to all parties who wish to give their opinion regarding the implementation of the proposed Skycity Project to attend the public hearing on **05 May 2003, 1:00 PM at Session Hall, Sangguniang Panglunsod Legislative Building, City Hall Complex, Maysilo Circle, Boni Avenue, Mandaluyong City.**

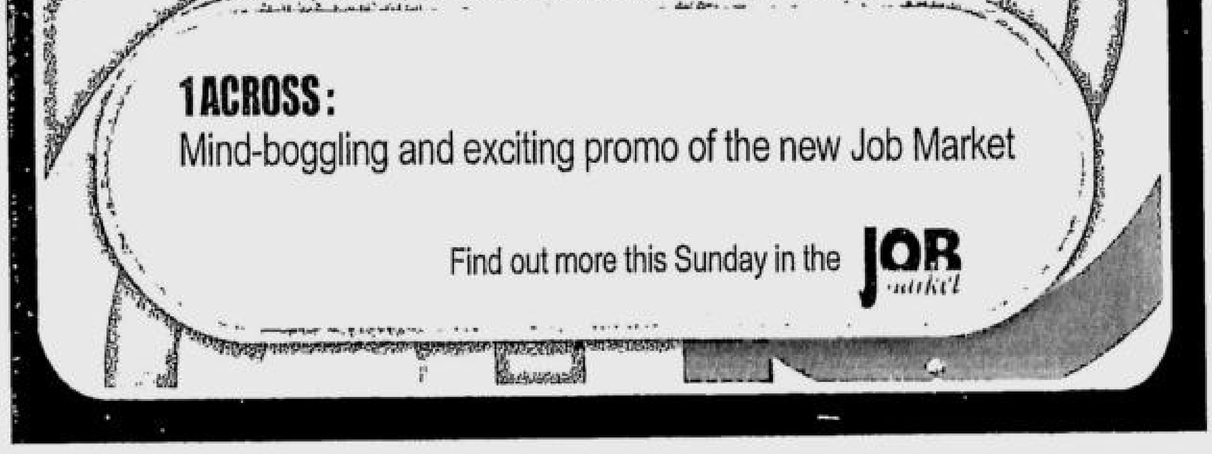
This Public Hearing is conducted in connection with the review of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) of the aforementioned project by the Environmental Management Bureau – National Capital Region (EMB-NCR) of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

All interested parties who wish to attend or participate in this Public Hearing should first register in person or by mail with the EMB-NCR at Congressional Plaza Building, #51 Congressional Avenue, Project 8, Quezon City.

Individual and/or organizations may give their opinion(s) in a concise position paper submitted to the EMB-NCR on or before **30 April 2003.**

For more details, please contact the EIA Division of EMB-NCR through Mrs. Maria Teresa S. Chavez or Carmela C. Paran at telephone numbers 9[illegible]3-96 or 453-88-14.

(PDI – April 8 & 15, 2003)



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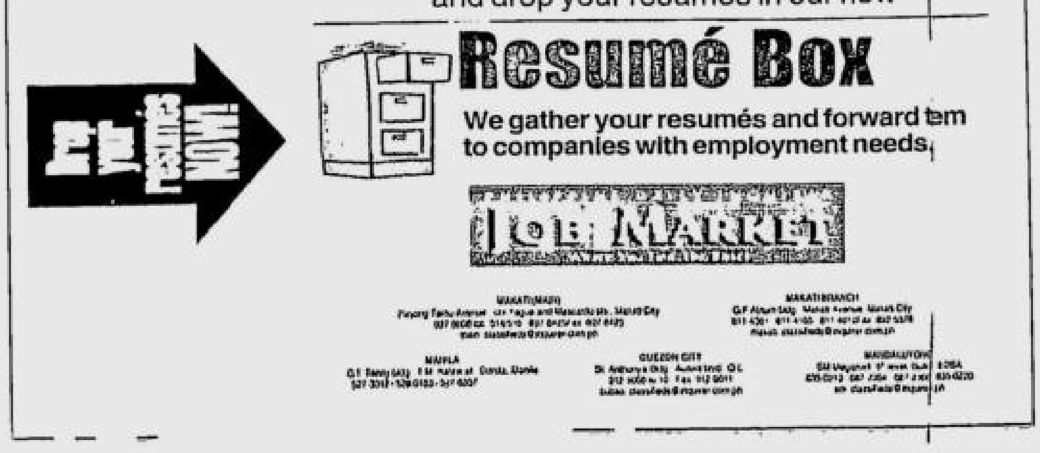

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JOB MARKET

How to prevent RP skyscrapers from being 'towering infernos'

ILLUSTRATION BY ALBERT RODRIGUEZ

By Tessa R. Salazar

HIGH-RISE buildings are known as the most complex of the building categories due to their height, size and their number of occupants.

For an architect and his team of professional engineers, constructing a high-rise building, no matter how complex, can be a walk in the park. The hard part is integrating safety engineering into their plans and systems. This means a building is esthetically pleasing yet also structurally soundproof and fireproof.

Critical factor

A fire safety engineer from Malaysia recently told a crowd of Filipino architects at the World Trade Center in Manila that "fire engineering" is a critical factor when designing "passive" and "active" fire protection systems for high-rises.

Tay Hao Giang, who has a science degree in building and fire safety engineering in the Heriot Watt University in Edinburgh, United Kingdom, stressed life safety, escape route design, and early detection and warning systems as the most important considerations in "fire engineering" buildings.

Strategies, he added, should be developed at the conceptual stages to contain fires, and for the effective evacuation of occupants under allowable egress time periods.

Fire, safety aspects

"The construction of high-rise buildings and towers should incorporate fire and safety aspects during the planning stage in greater detail and depth.

"As the world trend goes for buildings of greater heights, it may be impractical and impossible to evacuate all occupants in times of emergencies." Giang stressed builders had to reduce fire risks to a minimum and prioritize the life safety aspects.

He outlined to Filipino architects the keys to passive and active fire protection systems. For passive fire protection, he recommended firebreaks, compartmentalization, safe egress and escape routes, as well as fire resistant door sets. For active fire protection system, he recommended sprinkler systems, automatic fire detection and alarm systems, virtual software programs, preventive maintenance and the presence of fire safety engineers or managers.

Firebreaks

A modern building design, he said, should emphasize external firebreaks as precautionary measures to prevent the upward spread of fire. Giang said once an office block or a hotel complex catches fire, the flames would reach the flashover point if left unchecked. Full-blown fires spread upward through windows or walls.

If there are external firebreaks, there should also be internal firebreaks. Giang said compartmentalization serves such a purpose. The system's objective is to subdivide usable floor spaces into different fire zones so if a fire does break out in any of the zones, the blaze is contained, thus, more manageable.

Compartments

A conventional compartment, Giang said, of walls and floors—reinforces concrete or masonry brickwork—have fire-resistant durations between two and four hours. These are able to endure pressure buildups in any fire, and are even able to absorb certain amounts of explosive pressures.

Then there's the modern lightweight partition and flooring systems that have replaced masonry compartments of walls and floors. Dry and lightweight construction materials are favored for their speedy installation features.

Giang, however, said modern conventional compartments of walls and floors should be properly engineered, designed, constructed and tested to satisfy all requirements so that they would perform just like their conventional counterparts.

Key to life safety

In any fire incident, efficient evacuation of all occupants is the key to life safety, said Giang. He said the design of vertical escape routes is critical. He said fire escape staircases should be kept at optimum distances. Two fire escape staircases in the common center core are not ideal, even if it's economical, he said.

"If a center core design is unavoidable, then secondary means of egress should be provided as an alternative means of escape," he said.

It is also ideal for composite high rises to house residents at the lower part of the building, while offices occupy the upper parts.

Fire-resistant door sets should be used at fire escape staircases, protected corridor compartments, lift lobbies, hotel room entrances, public assembly panic exits, offices, apartments, condominium entrances, mechanical and electrical services rooms as well as riser ducts.

If fire-resistant door sets failed, Giang said escape could be impossible. A fire that starts in a hotel room, for example, could easily spread to outside corridors and eventually to the fire escape staircases. "Occupants at the upper stories have no more routes to make their escape," he said.

Most reliable system

Part of an active fire protection system is a sprinkler system, considered the most reliable fire suppression system. The sprinkler system requires storage tanks, pump sets, electrical motors, engines, various types of control valves, starter panels, installation valves, pressure switches and gauges, flow meters and sprinkler heads.

A building that uses substandard products on any part will have its entire sprinkler system fail in emergencies, he said.

"ISO standards should be adopted," he said. Giang also stressed only qualified professionals should install the system.

First line of defense

The first line of defense in a fire is the automatic fire detection system. Giang encourages pre-evaluating fire hazards to incorporate the right detector type into the design.

He suggested a voice alarm system that could be broadcast to specific fire zones for evacuation purposes.

A professional in-house fire and safety emergency response team should also be trained to handle emergencies. Evacuation drills should be conducted and special consideration should be given to handicapped occupants.

An updated virtual software program and the latest building plans, including 3D images of the building, should be stored for ready reference for authorities during an emergency. "This is vital for rescue and evacuation purposes during a fire incident," Giang stressed.

Summer Day Camp
at Ayala Westgrove

DE LA ROSA opens the summer camp.

Westgrove holds family summer camp

"SUMMER fun" officially began on March 23 during a family summer camp that gathered residents who gamely engaged in camping and sporty activities at the Ayala Westgrove Heights, a high-end residential development characterized by abundant greenery and rolling terrain in Silang, Cavite.

Basic camping skills were discussed with homeowners by representatives from the Boy Scouts of the Philippines, who also helped facilitate the activities with the Makati City Council and the Laguna Red Cross emergency response team. All the participants were taught about basic camping skills such as first-aid, knot-tying, compass navigation and tent pitching.

Games, winners

After the miniworkshops, three exciting games were successfully held. These are an obstacle course that combined a test of physical and mental skills; the Amazing Camping Race which tested the value of the family working as a team; and the Family Buzz Challenge, a fun twist to a quiz show.

Winners of the events were the Santos family for the obstacle course, Ganido family for the Amazing Camper Race, and Ganiz family for the Family Buzz Challenge and Scout's Honor Award. They were all awarded generous prizes like overnight stay at the Hotel Intercon in Makati. After the challenging feats, everyone was treated to a lunch of special meals usually served in camp-outs.

The outdoor affair held at the subdivision's Central Park District, was one of the major activities prepared by Ayala Land for Westgrove Heights homeowners. It aims to foster camaraderie among the growing community of more than 40 families who are residing in a 2,500-hectare alternative regional growth center south of Metro Manila.

Tristan de la Rosa, senior vice president of Ayala Land, said that as developers, they want to emphasize on the steadily growing community of Westgrove Heights. "Through these activities, we want to encourage opportunities for bonding among the homeowners, because Ayala Land believes that Westgrove Heights is an ideal setting for rearing families and a healthy community."

The subdivision stands on what was previously a mango orchard. The natural flora and fauna of the area was preserved to provide an ecologically sound area that is conducive to raising families. The site offers cool, fresh weather and scenic views of Laguna de Bay, Mt. Makiling and Tagaytay Ridge. At the same time, it is situated near prestigious institutions such as De La Salle Canlubang, St. Scholastica's College and Don Bosco, and the Laguna Technopark.

AYALA Westgrove Heights lot owners like the Tumbocon family complete the scavenger race puzzle.

Nature themed activities

"We try to come up with nature-themed activities like this summer camp to promote the ecological environment of Westgrove Heights, which makes it a very distinguished and special development," said De la Rosa. He added that these activities also provide an opportunity for future home buyers to actually see and experience the natural beauty of the place, while interacting with the growing community of Westgrove Heights.

Westgrove Height's Central Park District consists of a soccer field, a man-made lagoon which contains about 10,000 fish, a world-class village clubhouse, picnic areas, and jogging/bicycle paths—amenities which are now being enjoyed by the residents. The facility, surrounded by more than 4,000 mango trees, also has neighborhood parks, gardens/waterways, open and covered basketball courts, tennis courts, greenbelts, tree-lined streets, an adult fitness area, and children's play area called Kidsgrove.

The Kidsgrove Center has an interactive wet play area, dry play area, swimming pool, junior-sized basketball court, multipurpose rink and boardwalks—all exciting treats for young dwellers of Westgrove Heights.

Says De la Rosa: "Moving south is probably the most viable option for home buyers now. Those fed up with city living and all the pollution can only yearn to go back to the basics, of trying to build a home, with family, friends and community. They will know it once they enter Westgrove Heights—a feeling that they've just come home."

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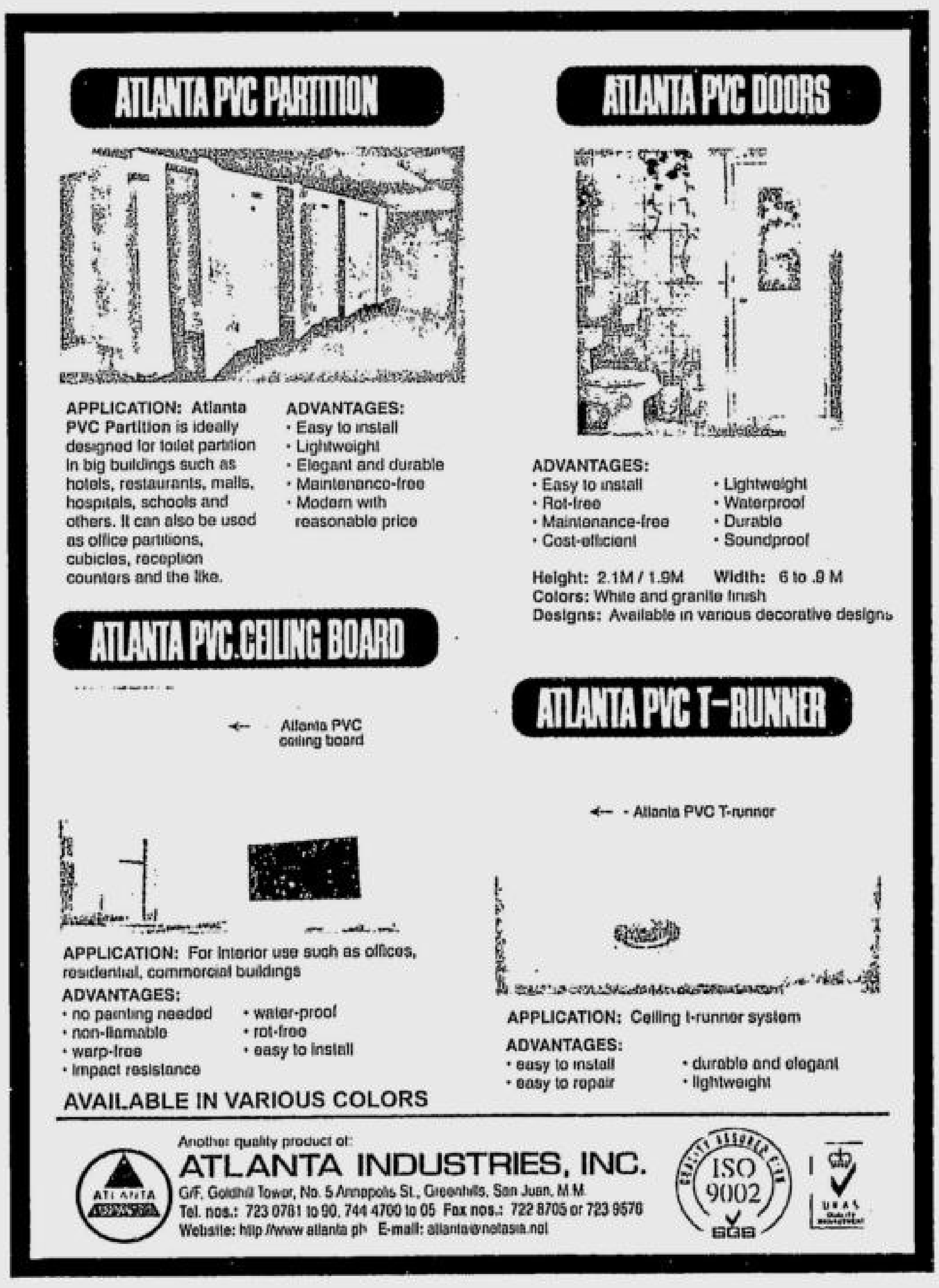
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← - Atlanta PVC T-runner
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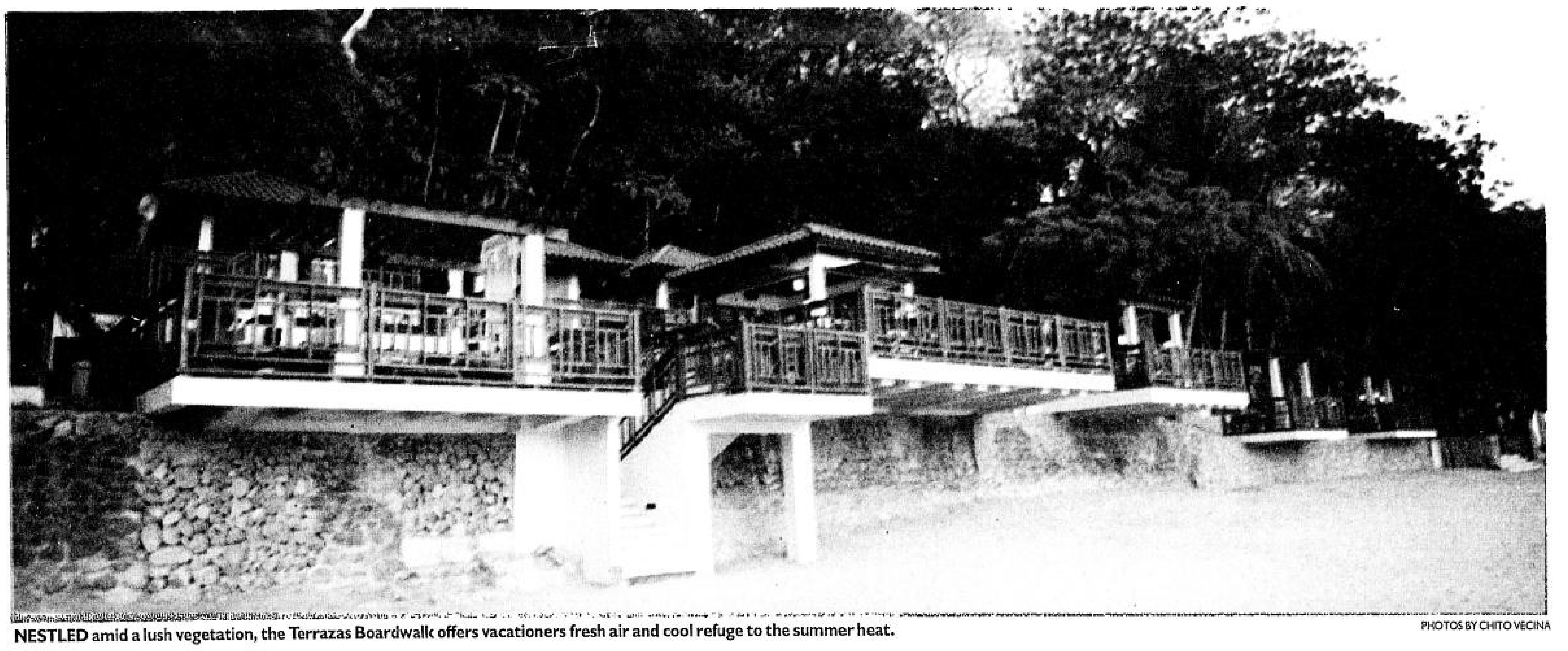


NESTLED amid a lush vegetation, the Terrazas Boardwalk offers vacationers fresh air and cool refuge to the summer heat.

PHOTOS BY CHITO VECINA

TERRAZAS BOARDWALK

Latest concept to attract beach frolickers

By Charles E. Buban

MEMBERS of the Peninsula de Punta Fuego in Nasugbu, Batangas, will no longer have to think of some place else as they can just take a 20-minute ride to a nearby property that offers new reason for them to enjoy white sands and breathtaking sunset view.

Nestled at the feet of lush rolling hills, this latest 42-hectare seafront property makes up the second phase of the Peninsula, which is jointly being developed by Landco Pacific Corp., Roxaco Land Corp. and the Pedrosa family.

The Las Terrazas de Punta Fuego is envisioned by its developers to provide a vacation ambience that is a world apart from the mansions and facilities that can be found in Metro Manila.

It will highlight two elements: a private enclave for its vacationers and a more socially oriented boardwalk.

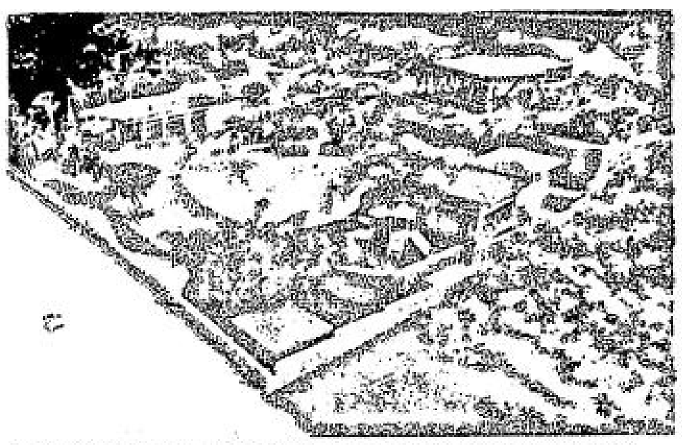
The boardwalk

The Terrazas Boardwalk, which was formally unveiled on Saturday, is a fresh approach to beach front property design that encourages people to go out more to enjoy open-air ambience, according to its project director Jose Antonio Xeres-Burgos.

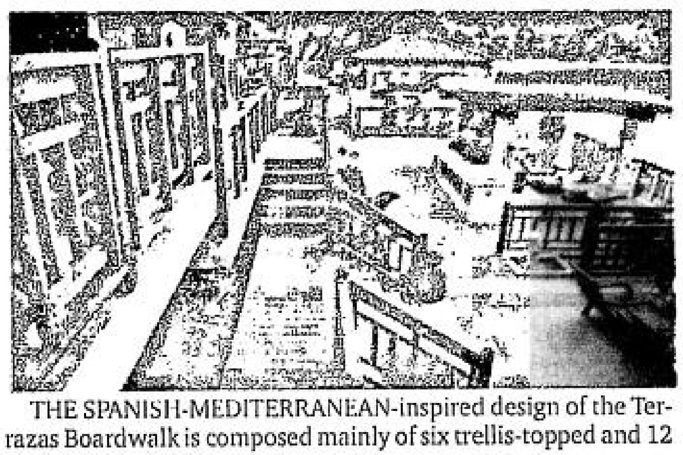
Composed mainly of six trellis-topped and 12 covered cabanas set on a network of concrete and wooden planks, the Terrazas Boardwalk hopes to recreate a Boracay experience.

Here families and friends can gather around or hold parties amid the white sand beach of Munting Buhangin.

Architects from Recio+Casas conceived a design such that every corner of the Terrazas is accessible despite the terrain as well as the twists and the turns.



BIRD'S-EYE view of the Terrazas de Punta Fuego property



THE SPANISH-MEDITERRANEAN-inspired design of the Terrazas Boardwalk is composed mainly of six trellis-topped and 12 covered cabanas.

Less of the indoors

Unlike the Peninsula where attractions are mostly indoors, Terrazas will only devote 30 percent, which will include the beach club that houses a restaurant, game room, videoke bar, locker room facilities, and a huge, Balinese-inspired swimming pool.

The Terrazas developers said these outdoor attractions were actually in response to what the Peninsula residents were clamoring for.

Another concept the developers highlighted is the beach club's well preserved forest cover that make up close to 50 percent of the property's total land area.

"We value trees so we work around them as much as possible," explained Xeres-Burgos. "Their presence makes this place cool and shady even during the middle of the day."

ARCHITECT FOR ONE GATEWAY PLACE

Robinsons Land Corp. has appointed Recio+Casas as architect for One Gateway Place, the company's newest residential project. One Gateway Place offers one-bedroom and studio units and is located beside the Robinsons Mall, which is under construction at the corner of Edsa and Pioneer Street in Mandaluyong City. The agreement was recently formalized during a contract signing between RLC High Rise Buildings Division general manager Danilo E, Ignacio, second from left, and Jose Pedro Recio, principal architect. Also shown are Carmelo Casas, principal architect and RLC project director Tony V. Lisa.

Developer to build highest Italian-inspired condo in QC

REAL estate developer 24K Property Ventures Inc. has set the groundbreaking of the 23-story Torre, Venezia—the Italian-inspired residential condominium on Timog Avenue corner Scout Santiago Street in Quezon City—on April 8.

Torre Venezia will be another landmark project of the 24K Property Ventures, which through the years has been known for successful development, construction, lease, sale and marketing of real estate, whether commercial, industrial or residential.

World-class amenities

The Italian-inspired residential structure boasts of world-class condo amenities such as fitness gym and daycare center, octagonal gazebo walkway, garden and playground, commercial spaces at the ground floor and second floor, podium landscape and cascading water nature, grand lobby with modern ambience lighting and a façade with elegant arches.

Torre Venezia will start selling at P1.5 million and clients can avail themselves of a 10-percent down payment while the remaining balance is payable in year.

GUINHAWA

The 24K Property Ventures' lowest payment plan is the first in the industry to give clients a chance to own a place at the most affordable scheme.

The company will tie up with Pag-Ibig Fund which makes it possible for interested clients to own a unit at the lowest monthly amortization.

It plans to change the skyline and landscape of Quezon City that's why most of its projects are strategically located in the heart of this area.

Breakthroughs

Founded in 1990, the 24K Property Ventures has made breakthroughs in the real estate sector with its state-of-the-art projects including the 24K Mansion on Timog Avenue and the 20 Lansbergh Place, the luxurious 20-story first-class office condominium which stands as the highest structure to date on Tomas Morato Avenue.

Says 24K Property Ventures president and CEO Rodolfo Guinhawa: "As a developer, I believe that it pays to do project one at a time to ensure that the property we sell are not "half-naked." This is our advantage and secret of success because at the end of the day, our clients come to realize that they are not shortchanged and their investments are really worth it."

Have the right building material, protect your home from fire

SOMEONE living in a mansion and one whose home is a shanty are bound by a common fear—that of losing their homes in a fire.

Timed with fire-prevention month, James Hardie Phils. Inc. (JHPI) announced that it is doing its share in minimizing the damage caused by fire by coming up with HardiFlex, a fire-resistant fiber cement board (FCB) for wall and ceiling applications, said JHPI marketing manager Junie Rondon.

Infomercial

Also, contributing to fire prevention consciousness, JHPI is running a 15-second television "infomercial" on making one's home fire resistant.

"With HardiFlex, you don't have to lose your entire home or belongings to fire. HardiFlex, which is mainly made of cement and wood fiber from replenishable forests in New Zealand and the US, stops spread of fire because of its special fire-resistant qualities," said Rondon.

Like concrete, HardiFlex is long lasting and requires low maintenance. And unlike wood, HardiFlex is water-resistant, termite-proof, and does not rot or warp. It also comes with a 10-year guarantee.

HardiFlex does not contain asbestos. "Asbestos poses enormous health risks and has been banned in many countries," explained Rondon.

State-of the-art plant

The fiber cement innovator opened a state-of-the-art plant in Cabuyao, Laguna, in 1997 to make its low-maintenance, long-lasting and safe building materials more accessible to local homebuilders.

A staff member of the Association of Philippine Volunteer Fire Brigades observed that fires know no reason. All it takes at any time is one seemingly harmless move—a cigarette butt recklessly thrown aside, a candle or a small appliance left unattended and your home will be reduced to ashes faster man you can shout "Fire!"

A safe home is a fire-resistant home. Ensure your family's safety by using fire-resistant building materials for the roof over your heads, Rondon advised. "You can actually minimize the damage to your home, by retarding fire and thus stopping it from spreading," Rondon said.

New firm advances steel framing

A BETTER and safer home for a lower cost is what people look for during this time when austerity is greatly considered.

Families with low-income hope to avail such a dwelling for their safety and security. But price hike makes it impossible.

The construction industry is harshly affected by the stressed economy of the region. Nevertheless, labor cost has increased.

Unified to answer the need for a safe and cost-efficient housing unit, five steel framing companies here in the country formed the Steel Alliances of the Philippines (SFAP). Their main concern is to advance their goal to revolutionize building technology. To achieve this, the alliance works in the promotions and awareness campaigns for the acceptance of its member-companies in the residential and commercial construction.

This state-of-the-art construction option offers a total innovation. With steel framing there is a guaranteed superior building material compared with the traditional wood framing. It has the highest strength-to-weight ratio of building materials and is 100 percent recyclable. It is noncombustible, thus, making it a safer choice, especially for residential construction. It does not rust, warp, split or crack, neither does it expand nor contract with moisture content or humidity. For the best-quality product, SFAP has imposed standards for its member companies to comply.

This cutting-edge technology is beneficial to the builders. With its weight lighter compared with wood, construction is made easier and materials selection is also less complicated. There will no longer be problems with straight walls and square corners. Doors and windows open and close as they should and require only small punch list. Scrap and waste is greatly reduced (2 percent for steel versus 20 percent for lumber).

For the consumer, steel framing offers a long list of benefits. It has a high strength that results in safer structures, less maintenance and slower aging of structure. It is safe from fire and not vulnerable to termites and any type of fungi or organisms like molds. Because it is lightweight, there is lesser movement, thereby there is a smaller probability for foundation problems. Each piece is carefully attached by screw, making its connection stronger, thus makes it high winds tolerant and results in less seismic force.

In the use of gypsum and fiber cement, only steel frame can complement the innovative qualities, construction specifications and user friendliness. Major application such as drywall, ceiling and housing systems benefit from the goodness of the use of steel frame, gypsum board and fiber cement.

SFAP is confident in its visions to further the use of steel frames primarily because of the benefits it offers.

Assess your real needs before you build

By Alexis A. Acacio, Ph.D.

BUILDING DREAMS

A GOOD design plan is always a prerequisite to a successful construction project. So when the time comes to build your home, it is best that you design it properly to ensure that there is a fit between your needs and your home.

It is important that your real needs are properly interpreted in the design plans and are within your budget.

Avoiding expensive changes

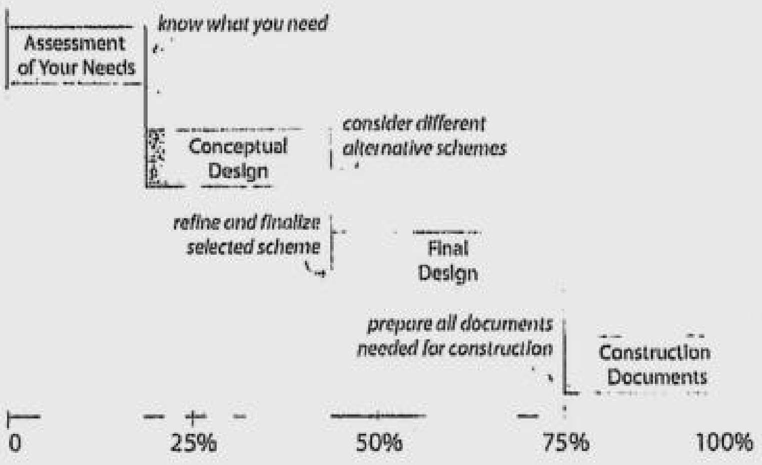
Changes in the design layout and specifications during the construction stage or after the materials are purchased and used can be a waste of money, time and energy. Many construction projects have gone over the budget because of excessive changes that were done during the construction phase. These changes would have been avoided if the design were reviewed many times prior to implementation.

In the design process, it may be a good idea to involve a construction professional because his/her experience can dictate whether a design is feasible or not. The construction professional can also give you a preliminary indication of costs and buildability. Not all design professionals have experience in construction so a design can look very good on paper but may be very difficult and expensive to construct.

Some design firms nowadays bring in construction professionals way before the construction commences so that they can get advice on the safe, cost-effective and efficient way of constructing your home or building. The construction professional being involved in the design phase serves as an adviser to the schedule and cost issues. Any design can be built but may require a considerable cost. The design process usually takes a few phases and your architect or designer will guide you on this. The various steps include:

- **Assessment of your needs.** As the owner, you assess the needs of your family. This involves decisions on the number of rooms, number of car garages, location of the living and dining spaces, etc. This involves consultation with your family members. You relay all of the information to your home designer or architect who will in turn make the conceptual schemes for you. If it is a commercial building, you assess the needs of your office or the future tenants of the building and make sure that the end users will have a space that will suit their requirements.

You would need a lot of information and advice from professionals, friends and design literature so you can fully assess your needs. You look at model homes or commercial spaces, read a lot of design magazines, ask your friends, etc. Your design professional will guide you in this process because if you do not know what your needs are, you will never know what to build.


Assessment of Your Needs
know what you need
Conceptual Design
consider different alternative schemes
refine and finalize selected scheme
Final Design
prepare all documents needed for construction
Construction Documents
0
25%
50%
75%
100%

THE FOUR PHASES OF DESIGN

- **Conceptual design.** Your designer, after listening to your specific needs and requirements, will then give you a conceptual design that is basically an interpretation of what you want in your home or building. The concept is then discussed with you in detail. The draft scheme is revised as many times as necessary until your requirements are met. As long as the concept does not satisfy you, keep on revising since the corrections at this stage are the cheapest—no materials and labor are being used yet.

This process depends on how fast you approve the design of your home or how quick your designer can interpret your dream home on paper. Preliminary costs are assessed at this stage and the budget is tested against your pocket.

- **Final design.** After the client or owner approves the conceptual design, the final design plan is done. The other designers (structural engineer, geotechnical engineer, electrical engineer, and the other professionals) are brought in during this phase to complete the other details of the plans. The various ways on how to improve the design are discussed among the various designers in the project. Considerations are done to accommodate the other facilities. For example, a wall is moved by the architect to provide a passageway for the air-conditioning system. The final design drawings are done at this stage.

- **Construction plans, documents.** The construction documents are then produced which are now ready for the builder to construct. Construction documents include specifications, estimates and the other materials that may be necessary to obtain the permits for construction. The design plans contain all the details of the structure that is to be built. Plans should be simple enough to be fully understood by the builder. These are either bid out to contractors or are negotiated with the contractor of your choice.

- **Reduce costs during design phase.** The ability to influence the cost of the project is greatest during the design phase and design changes only involve lots of paper and the designer's time. Design changes may not be free but these are still cheaper than tearing down a wall and constructing a new one. The degree of influence on the cost is highest during the design phase of a project and decreases as the various stages of construction progresses.

Changes during construction will cost you money and you may overshoot your budget. Remember though that you may still change specifications during construction.

Final advice

Spend a lot of time understanding and reviewing plans. Telling yourself that you should just get over the design and make changes during construction will surely cost you additional money.

It may be difficult for the non-engineer to understand design plans but do your best so that you can at least imagine how your house or building will look like after it is built.

(Alexis A. Acacio is an associate professor of civil engineering at the University of the Philippines. For comments and advice you may reach him at aaacacio@pacific.net.ph.)

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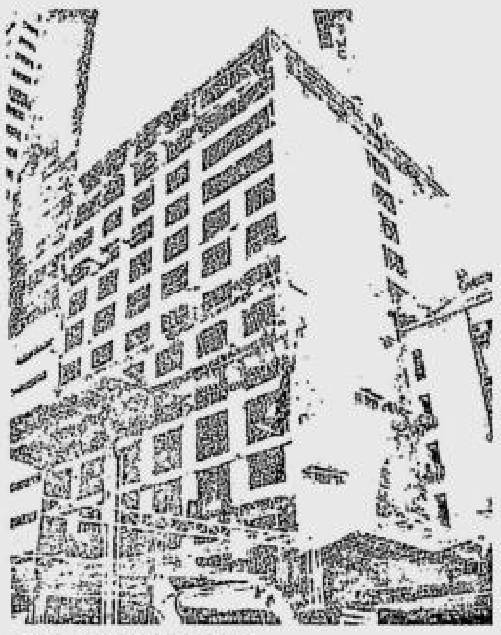


HALFWAY MARK

Structural work on Greenbelt Radissons, a 31-story residential condominium project of leading property developer Megaworld Corp., has reached the halfway mark with concrete pouring now at the 16th level. At the same time, Megaworld has started electromechanical and masonry works on the lower floors to complete the tower by the fourth quarter of 2004. Bounded by Soria and Aguirre Streets at the Greenbelt district, Greenbelt Radissons features a neo-contemporary architecture and a choice of studio and one- and two-bedroom units.

Federal Land opens online realty service

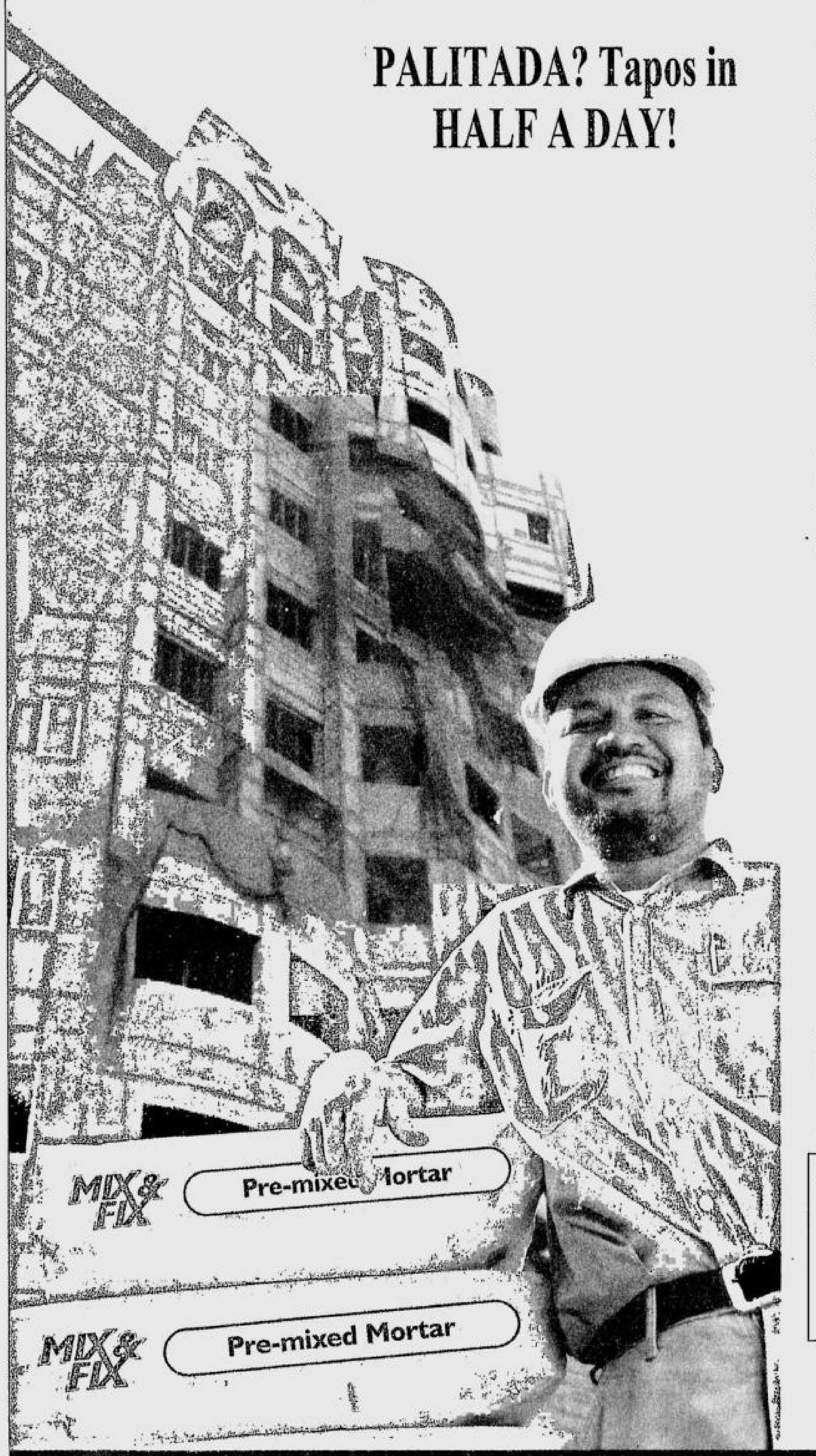
REAL estate developer Federal Land Inc. has announced the launch of its new corporate website at www.federalland.com.ph for potential buyers of residential and commercial property who have time to access their site via Internet.

The online real estate service features a comprehensive listing of all Federal Land residential and commercial projects, corporate profile about the developer, editorial content on ongoing activities and programs of the company, as well as online assistance for questions or information the browser may have about their projects. Along with the corporate website, they have also launched project-focused websites for Oriental Gardens Makati (www.orientalgardens.com.ph), Bay Gardens Condominiums (www.baygardens.com.ph) and Le Pavilion (www.lepavillon.com.ph).

Says Federal Land first vice president for marketing Ramon Aldaba: More home buyers are using the Internet to search for homes, condominiums or offices because it saves a lot of time and is very convenient. Through the website, our client is able to view the features, amenities, floor plans and even pricing terms—within the comfort of their office or home. Oftentimes, they are able to determine immediately which property would best suit their needs, and being online, it's just as easy to contact us via e-mail to get an investment proposal or simply to get our advice.

For many years, Federal Land has had a proven track record of building world-class quality vertical structures. Their portfolio includes the new GT Tower International on Ayala Avenue, Bay Gardens Condominiums at Metropolitan Park overlooking Manila Bay, Valencia Hills in San Juan near Greenhills Shopping Complex, and now rising—Oriental Gardens Makati on Pasong Tamo.

Federal Land is a member of the Metrobank group of companies.



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LIFESTYLE
Editor **Chelo Banal-Formoso**

More deceptive weight-loss advertising tactics

WELL AND GOOD

Tina Juan

THE UNITED States Federal Trade Commission (FTC) has been quite aggressive in running after unscrupulous marketers of weight loss and fitness products but, in spite of their efforts, they cannot fully protect gullible consumers because every year more and more products making false or unsubstantiated claims pop up. The situation has been likened to chopping off snakes on Medusa's head. For every snake that you cut off, two or three more spring up in place.

And if the FTC is having a hard time, you can just imagine our state of affairs here in the Philippines. Have you seen the ads on some home-shopping channels? Outrageous is the only word to describe some of them.

Being aware of the devious methods used to separate you from your hard-earned money is the only way to protect yourself.

Last week, I wrote about some ways before-and-after pictures can be manipulated to deceive consumers of weight-loss products. Here are other deceptive advertising tactics with regard to client testimonials, health expert endorsements and scientific claims.

Client testimonials

Testimonials are neither good nor bad. They are simply statements of clients on how a product affected them.

Testimonials are powerful because they offer consumers hope that they too will be successful using the product. They are more convincing than just reading about a product's features or scientific results proving its effectivity.

However, there are a couple of things you need to be aware of regarding testimonials. Just because the product worked for the one giving the testimony does not guarantee that it will work for you. In one fat-burner supplement ad, the client testifies that she lost 31 pounds in 28 days, but the fine print at the bottom of the ad says, "Results not typical and depend on your diet and training program. Average weight loss expected is eight pounds over eight weeks." A weight loss of one pound a week is a far cry from 1.1 pounds a day.

The person giving the testimonial has, in the majority of cases, been paid. This does not mean that what they are saying is not true but you do need to be

MORE/ C2

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Hi-Nutrition TANG
A mother always knows
Hi-Nutrition TANG

There are some things a mother always knows. Kung gaano nila kagusto ang sarap ng orange at kung gaano nila kailangan ang Vitamin C. At ito ang dahilan kaya walang katulad ang isang pitcher ng napakasarap na Tang na charged with calcium pa. A mother always knows.

More deceptive weight-loss advertising tactics

From page C1

aware that the financial compensation they received could influence what they say about the product.

Sometimes, the testimony is an outright lie. A locally produced TV infomercial features a woman claiming to have lost pounds and inches using the product (an exercise video and book). She sounds very convincing except that what she is saying is not true. She had never used the product and was paid to say those lines.

How do I know the "inside story" of this infomercial? I personally know the woman involved and she told me her story. Since she works as a part-time commercial model, as far as she was concerned, she was just "acting" in a commercial and getting paid for it. She was shocked when she saw the infomercial and realized that the advertisers portrayed her as a real person (they gave her a different name) who had used the product and was giving her testimony about how well it worked. It makes me wonder, what about the other "testimonials" in the infomercial? Are they also fake?

Health expert endorsements

Last year, while attending an international fitness convention, I was told that appearing in an infomercial meant a kiss of death to credible health and fitness professionals because so many infomercials employ deceptive methods to sell their products. Appearing on an infomercial meant that you had sold out or your career was doing so badly that you were desperate to make money at the expense of your reputation.

Here are some misleading practices concerning the use of health expert endorsements. The most blatantly false practice is using an actor to pass him off to the public as an expert. Another locally produced infomercial uses an American expatriate in a white coat with a stethoscope over his shoulder to make the audience believe he is a scientist who has done research on the product (an electronic device). The man is a commercial model and is married to someone I know. He is definitely not a scientist. He's just an actor out to make some part-time money. It's the makers of the infomercial who should be ashamed of themselves for trying to deceive the public.

Here is another example from a US-based commercial. The hosts of Fat Trapper infomercial (a chitosan-based product that supposedly absorbs the fat you eat) are former baseball player Steve Garvey and nutritionist Kendall Carson. In the commercial, the enthusiastic duo claim that by using Fat Trapper, consumers can eat whatever they want and still lose weight without dieting and exercising. However, in the world of weight-loss advertising, what you see is not always what you get. It turns out that Kendall Carson is actually Lark Kendall, an actress who was paid to portray a nutritionist.

Last year, she, Garvey and Enforma (makers of Fat Trapper and Exercise in a Bottle) were sued by the FTC for making false claims. Kendall settled out of court and agreed to give back to customers the fee she was paid for appearing in the commercial. Enforma also settled with the FTC and has agreed to pay back $10 million to its customers as a penalty for deceiving them. Garvey and the FTC are still battling it out in court.

Another deceptive practice is to take the words of experts out of context. A few years ago, I was in the audience listening to a lecture by Dr. Robert Girandola of Southern California University when someone asked him why the Oxycise infomercial (which claims that special breathing exercises will make you thin) quotes him as endorsing the product. He said that he was taken out of context and they made it appear that doing Oxycise was better than exercising on a stationary bike.

Dr. Julio Garcia, a Las Vegas plastic surgeon who appeared in the AbTronic infomercial (electronic muscle stimulation belt), told ABC News that the commercial took some of his words out of context to make it appear that using the machine alone will make a person lose weight, lose inches and gain muscle definition.

Scientific studies

Many health, fitness and nutritional products couch their ads in scientific jargon and claim to have the backing of scientific research. They may or may not be doing this responsibly.

Research can be used inappropriately when it is taken out of context or exaggerated conclusions are made. The company capitalizes on a small half-truth about the research and applies it big-time to their product.

For example, the research done on electronic muscle stimulation by Dr. Gad Alon of the University of Maryland was used by the AbTronic infomercial to support their claims. Alon told "Good Morning America's" consumer correspondent Greg Hunter that the AbTronic commercials took his findings out of context. Alon further told NBC News that the AbTronic company had never contacted him, that the research comes from work done in the mid-'80s, and that what AbTronic says in the infomercial has nothing to do with studies he or the university conducted.

Use your common sense; if the ad sounds too good to be true, it probably is

ILLUSTRATION: STEPH BRAVO

Here's another example. One of the studies done by Dr. Jeffrey Armstrong of the University of Eastern Michigan is used in Xenadrine (a fat burner) ads as proof that the product works. The ads claim that the participants in Armstrong's study who took Xenadrine gained 61 percent more lean body mass and lost 759 percent more weight and 524 percent more fat than those who took placebo.

However, according to Armstrong, who was interviewed by Penny Crabtree of The San Diego Union-Tribune, "Cytodyne's (the company that makes Xenadrine) math is technically accurate but dishonest."

Armstrong said that "percentages were used to inflate what were in many cases differences of no or little statistical importance". The results in terms of absolute pounds show that those who took Xenadrine lost an average of 4.5 pounds during the six-week study or less than half a pound each week when compared with those who took placebo.

Armstrong told Crabtree, "Any dietary supplement company is more concerned about being able to use (studies) for marketing than anything else. Very few are concerned with whether it actually works."

Tommy Boone, editor in chief of The Journal of Exercise Physiology (the scientific journal where the study in question was first published in May 2001), was incensed at the way Armstrong's research was misrepresented by Cytodyne. In his May 2002 article, "Exercise Physiology Quackery and Consumer Fraud," he wrote that if you want to "understand the difference between professional and unprofessional, between ethical and unethical, between quackery and honesty, and simply between right and wrong" then all you have to do is compare the Xenadrine ads with the original study.

"The advertisement is nothing more than consumer fraud. Any respectable researcher will understand the fraud and quackery demonstrated by those responsible for the marketing piece from Cytodyne Technologies."

Common sense

There is such a thing as "common sense." It's free and everyone has an unlimited supply. Use your head. If a weight-loss or muscle-gaining ad sounds "too good to be true," it probably is. If it were that easy to lose weight or gain muscle, everyone would be walking around with slim and defined bodies.

Watch "In Fitness & In Health" Mondays to Fridays on Studio 23 (6-6:30 a.m.) and Net25 (6-6:30 p.m.).

For questions, past articles and exercises, go to www.tinajuanfitness.com

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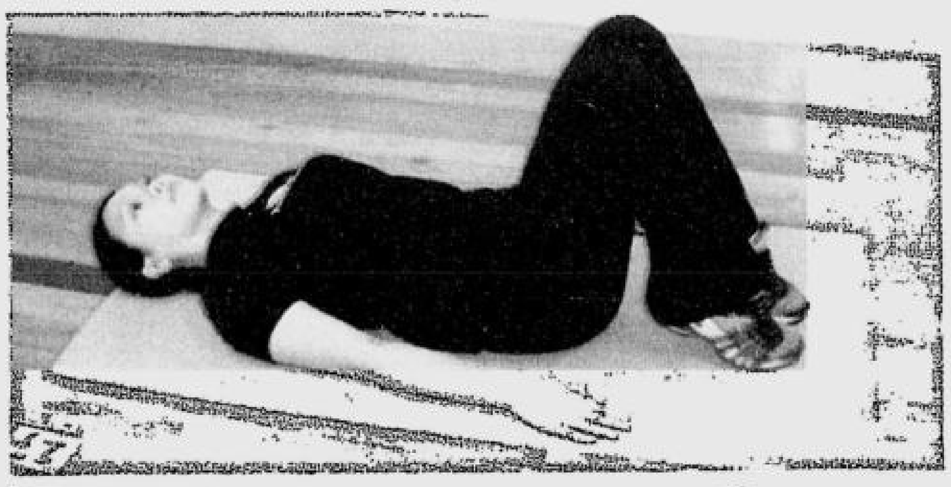
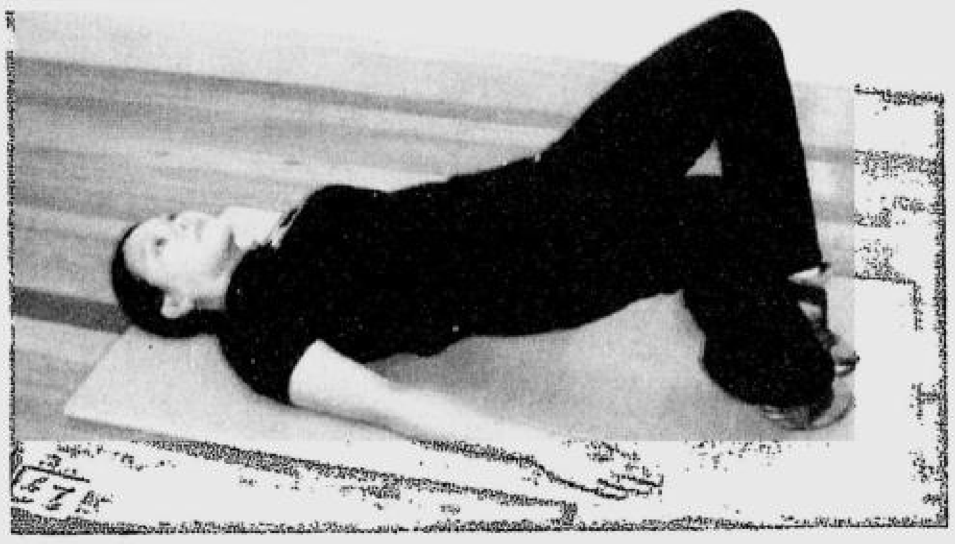
EXERCISE OF THE WEEK

Open-close buttocks bridge





THIS exercise tightens and tones buttocks, inner thighs and hamstrings (back of thighs) as well as challenges the stability of torso muscles—abdominals and lower back.

Equipment:
Exercise mat

Exercise technique:

1. Lie down with your knees bent, feet together, heels raised and arms beside your hips with palms down.
2. Press down with the balls of your feet and contract your buttocks as you raise your pelvis off the floor.
3. While keeping your heels and pelvis raised off the floor, open your knees outward then close your knees together using your inner thighs. Continue opening and closing your knees for the desired number of repetitions.
4. Lower your pelvis back down to the mat.

Performance tips:

1. Do all movements slow and controlled.
2. Keep upper back and shoulders on the floor. Raise only the pelvis and lower back.
3. Do not allow your lower back to sag towards the floor. Keep a straight back (with a natural curve in the lower back).
4. Squeeze and contract buttocks and inner thighs when you bring knees together.

Repetitions:

Do 10 repetitions (one repetition equals opening and closing the knees). Rest. Do another set if you want to.

Children's hospital marks 23rd year

THE PHILIPPINE Children's Medical Center (PCMC) will hold its 23rd anniversary celebration on April 21-25 at the PCMC grounds. This year's theme is "PCMC: Working Towards a Happy, Healthy Family."

The event will showcase activities focusing on the healthy child and positive support to a strong family.

Activities are: April 21—Orchid, herbal and alternative medicines, and plant exhibit; April 22—Children's on-the-spot ceramic and paper coloring contest; April 23—Highlights on IPPV Treatment, DOTS for tuberculosis in children, and extremely low birth weight babies and sportsfest volleyball championship; April 24—Game ka na ba and Karaoke singing contest; and April 25—Employees' Program, Philippine Regions on Parade.

Call 924-6601 locals 238 and 262.

Night of music and tribute marks SLMC's 100th anniversary

IT all started in 1903. From a small dispensary in Tondo, Manila, catering mostly to the poor, it has grown to be the leading provider of world-class health-care service in the country today.

Marking its 100th anniversary this year, St. Luke's Medical Center (SLMC), in cooperation with the Cultural Center of the Philippines, recently presented a night of music, a program highlighted by the recognition of selfless endeavors of the many men and women past and present who made the hospital what it is today.

Participated in by Ballet Philippines, Madrigal Singers, Robert Sena, Isay Alvarez and Celeste Legaspi, the affair was a time to renew old ties and relax from nerve-wracking medical schedules.

It was indeed a night to celebrate life and look forward to another hundred years of excellent medical service.

THE MADRIGAL Singers

DR. Emmanuel Gatchalian, doctor emeritus of Geriatric Center and wife, Dr. Pacita Gatchalian

JOE Ledesma, SLMC president and CEO

DR. Arsenio Cantos, SLMC senior VP and medical director

BALLET Philippines

GRETCHEN Cojuangco, one of many VIPs who graced the event

SEA junior table tennis tourney set in Manila

THE LG 9th Southeast Asian Juniors Table Tennis Championship will be held at Glorietta Activity Center and Rizal Memorial Coliseum. The four-day tourney on April 22-25 was officially launched last week at Dusit Hotel Nikko. The event is organized by Table Tennis Association of the Philippines (Tatap), IMG and LG Electronics.

Malaysia, Brunei, Singapore, Vietnam and Indonesia have confirmed their participation.

Matches will start at 9 a.m. at Rizal Memorial Coliseum, and 10:30 at Glorietta. The semis and finals for the team event will be held the day after, with the individual events following on April 24. The quarterfinals, semifinals and finals for the individual events will take place on April 25, together with the awarding ceremonies at Glorietta Activity Center at 6 p.m.

CELSO Dayrit, Philippine Olympic Committee president; Henry Jang, president LG Collins; Victor Valbuena, Tatap president; Oscar Santelices, Tatap Sec-Gen; Princess Galura, managing director-IMG and the National Team

Controversy on reincarnation

Part I

INNER AWARENESS

Jaime T. Licauco

I'VE been called many names before, like "mind reader" or "psychic" (which I am not), "paranormal researcher," "guru" and even "master" (a term I hate). But never have I been referred to as "con man."

So, when a freelance writer whom I only recently met informed me there's a highly negative article written about me with the almost libelous title: "Jaime Licauco: Shaman or con man?" I rushed to the nearest bookstore to grab a copy.

The three-page article (four, including my caricature) was written by a certain Manuel Escasa in a newly launched men's and fashion magazine. He is entitled to his opinion, but he has no right to call people names or malign their person. A "con man," according to the Oxford Dictionary of the English Language, is a "confidence trickster." I am not interested in a court litigation for an article which I do not believe will have a large readership. But I have to answer the arguments he advanced against my views on reincarnation and the Bible.

It is expected that a grossly misunderstood and controversial subject, such as reincarnation, will generate strong opposition from certain quarters that do not subscribe to it.

Lopsided article

What Escasa lacks in solid argument and evidence he makes up for in sarcasm and wise cracks. He also has the tendency to ignore data or quotations that clearly go against his preconceived conclusions.

Mr. Escasa belabors the arguments based on the Bible and religious beliefs whereas I clearly pointed out in that series of articles that my belief in reincarnation is not based primarily on the Bible nor on Church doctrine but on science, personal experiences, revealed messages from the spirit world and numerous personal testimonies from many other sources. It does not really matter to me whether the Bible supports the concept of reincarnation or not (although I think it does) because that is not my primary basis.

Even before the Escasa article begins, the reference to me as a "self-styled mysticism expert" is already wrong. I have never really claimed to be either a "mystic" or an "expert." So how can I be described as "self-styled?" In fact, it is the magazine itself that called me that.

What tweaked the religious sensibilities of Escasa was the series of articles on reincarnation and the Bible, which came out in this column. The series was actually a transcript of the interview that Fathers Bel San Luis and Jerome Marquez, both Divine Word Society priests, had with me in their radio program "Salitang Buhay" over dzMM.

Objective writings

My writings and arguments are always based either on facts, objective evidence, personal testimonies, or sound reasoning. I sometimes commit mistakes, like the spelling of Pope Vigilius' name, which Mr. Escasa so gleefully pointed out, but they are never intentional nor meant to deceive anyone. I do not recall any occasion where I had "recast biblical passages." They are always quoted as accurately as possible. Interpretation of biblical passages may differ from one person to another.

Just because Escasa disagrees with my interpretation does not make him right and I wrong. We can both be wrong.

If I force people to think for themselves and not rely merely on the opinion of others, including priests and myself, is that being a menace to reason? So be it. But I think my influence is rather exaggerated.

"If reincarnation is so crucial in helping us understand the purpose of human existence and nature of the human person, why does Christ say nothing straightforward about it? The little that seems to be about reincarnation is so obscure. Why would he have us guessing?"

The fact is, you can't find the word "reincarnation" in the Bible at all. That term was not used in ancient times. And I pointed this out in my series of articles. The word used at that time was either "metempsychosis" or "transmigration of souls" or even "resurrection," not reincarnation.

Furthermore, there was no need for Jesus to say so, because it seems clear as pointed out by Rev. Leslie Weatherhead in his excellent booklet, "The Case for Reincarnation," that at that time, the idea of multiple rebirth seems to be presumed and accepted by everybody. Several passages in the Bible seem to indicate this, as when the disciples asked Jesus about the blind man, "Who did sin, his parents or he that he was born blind?" The question presupposed the sin was committed before the man was born.

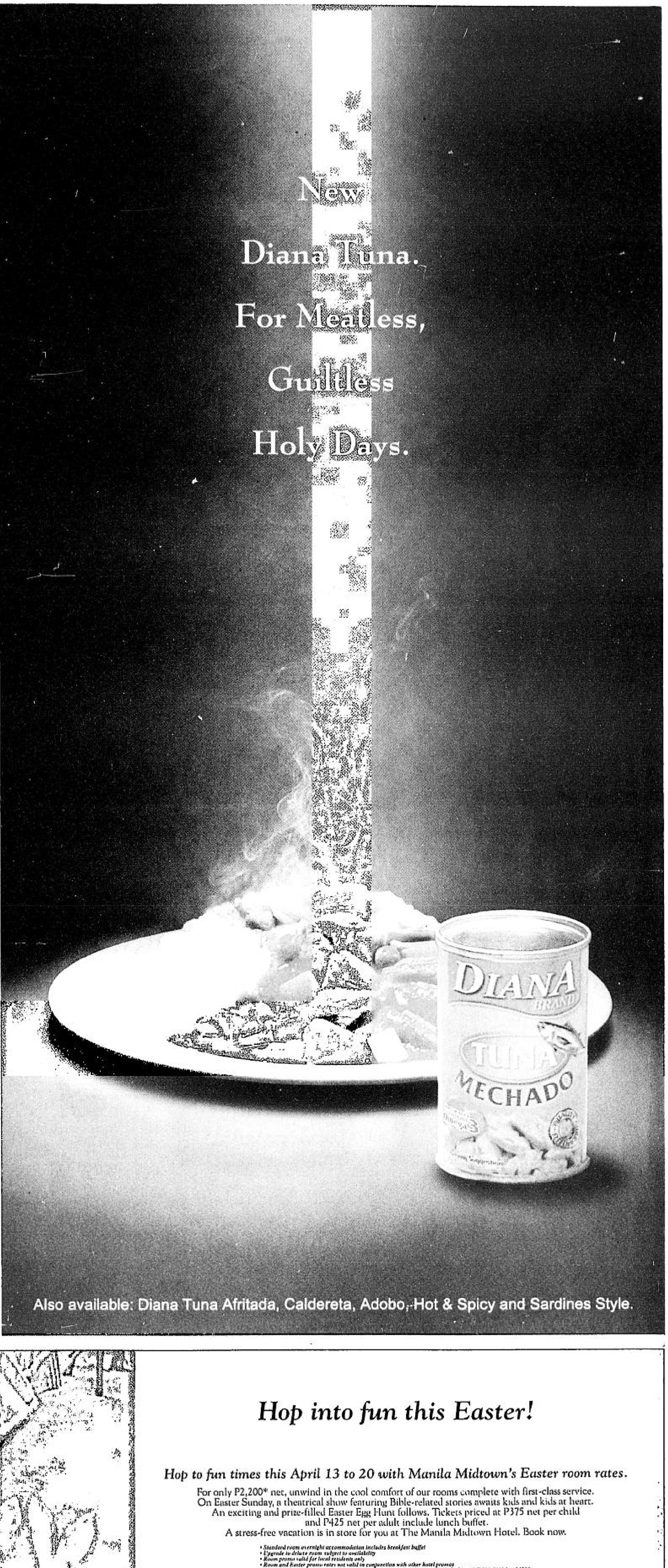
"If, as Licauco claims, Judaism believed in reincarnation, then why did Jesus not come out and say he was the reincarnation of these individuals named by Licauco?"

Let us not put words into my mouth. It was not I who said Jesus was the reincarnation of anybody else. I was quoting Edgar Cayce who said while in a trance that Jesus was formerly "Adam, Joseph, Joshua, Josue and Enoch," among others.

Why didn't Jesus say so himself? Because he said that to some are revealed the secrets of the kingdom of heaven but to others are not, because "they have ears but hear not, and have eyes but see not, neither do they understand." So he spoke to them in parables.

Contrary again to what Escasa said, as quoted above, I never claimed that "Judaism believed in reincarnation." That word never even existed at that time, as I had pointed out earlier. What I said was that "early Christians believed in some sort of preexistence of the soul which was necessary for belief in reincarnation."

Address letters to this column to 308 Prince Plaza I, 106 Legaspi St., Greenbelt, Makati City or e-mail jlicauco@edsamail.com.ph. Visit my new website at http://j.licauco.tripod.com. Listen to my DZMM radio program every Sunday, 6-8 p.m.



Also available: Diana Tuna Afritada, Caldereta, Adobo, Hot & Spicy and Sardines Style.

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Searching for a savior

INSIDE OUT

Cory Quirino

SOMEONE once said that pain is what drives people to seek salvation in an individual or circumstances. A message from your soul, pain tells you what needs to be changed in yourself. There are two ways to look at this.

1) Go outward and find solace from your saviors (new mate, new house, new job, new car).

2) Go inward and find answers from the wisdom of your soul.

Pursuing a savior is, in psychological terms, a means to distract you from facing problems (sadness, discomfort, fear, anger). Instead of looking at your pain and understanding it, you turn to someone or something that can make you forget—a "savior." But when you ignore your emotions, you also ignore the real issues in your life.

Let's try a little self-examination. Make a list of your saviors. With each item, try to discern your feelings and where they are coming from. Because emotions are energies, they can be felt through: your chest/heart—a flutter or palpitation. This means you may have closed your heart. Message: You need to forgive.

> Controlling and understanding one's emotions are means to acquire inner power

Your solar plexus/abdomen—acidity in your stomach. You may have fear of rejection, your self-worth depends on the approval of others. Message: Accept yourself first. Believe in yourself more.

Your throat—soreness/perennial cough. Unexpressed feelings have closed your throat. Message: Speak with honesty. Do not be afraid to speak your mind.

Your head—migraines/headaches. You may not want to accept certain truths about your life. Message: Acknowledge the truth you refuse to see. If you stop resisting it, your headaches will fade away.

New savior

Your work remains unfulfilled if you continue to search for a savior. When emotional awareness is put aside, a new savior appears—new car, bigger house, more expensive jewelry, new dress. This act places upon your saviors the responsibility of doing what you should be doing. And that is, transforming your fear and doubt into trust and love.

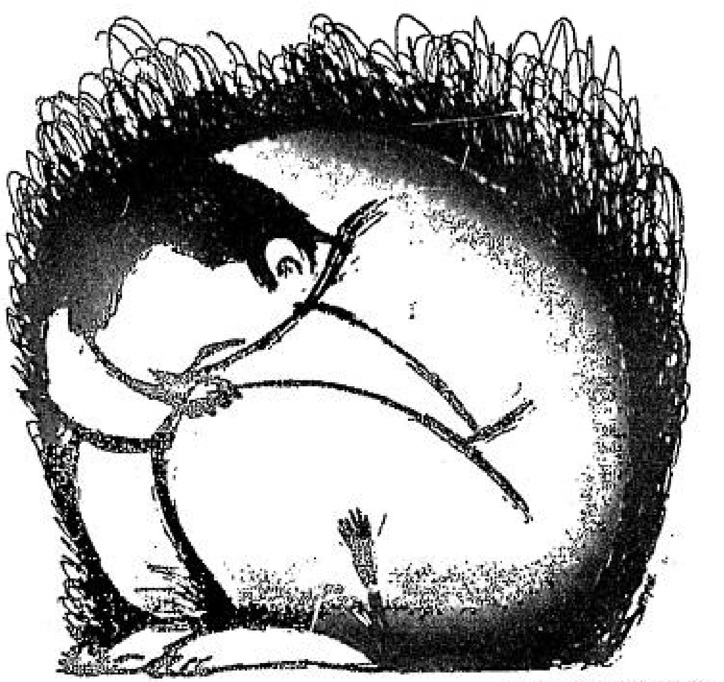

ILLUSTRATION: STEPH BRAVO

Power of spirit

Controlling and understanding your emotions is a way to acquire inner power.

1) Take time out. Give yourself a quiet moment to reflect, pray, meditate. A few minutes each day will do. If your mind is distracted, just tell it to be silent.

2) Practice the art of embracing silence. It is only during your quietest moment that you can hear your heart/soul speak to you.

3) Listen to the wisdom of your inner voice.

4) Talk to the inner you. Once you are "in touch," you get connected to the immortal part of yourself—your soul which is your bridge to your Creator.

5) Do an affirmation to save yourself. "I have the power to create happiness in my life. My happiness is within me."

6) If you want to heighten your spiritual experience, fast for 24 hours on water, fresh apple juice/coconut water.

Skin savers

- Wear long-sleeved white shirt over a strapless summer outfit. It will shield your skin from sunburn.
- Have a bowl of iced water available. When the heat is unbearable, sprinkle your face with cool water.
- Keep an aloe vera plant handy or buy aloe vera gel. Great for insect bites and sunburn. Apply directly on skin (minus its green skin).
- The summer heat and breeze can dehydrate your skin. Drink a cool glass of water every 1-1/2 hours.
- Wear shades. They will prevent you from squinting and having wrinkles around the eyes.
- Have a coconut milk bath. Pour fresh liquid on your hair and body and lavish in it for 5 minutes. Great for rehydrating everything it touches.

Love and light!

Excerpted from: "The Heart of the Soul" by Dr. Gary Zukav and Linda Francis

Strong natural immunity can fight SARS, other infections

HEALTH Express, retailer of health supplements, advocates building up the body's natural immunity as the best and cheapest way to fight diseases like the dreaded Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS).

SARS is transmitted by droplets (5 microns) and is not airborne (<5 microns). This means that it can only be transmitted if the patient coughs, sneezes or speaks out loud, spreading droplets from the mouth to an area of within 3 feet radius.

Based on World Health Organization estimates, the toll as of April 7 is 98 deaths, 2,601 cases in 17 countries.

The best proactive measure against SARS and other infections is to build up good immunity. "Building up good body immunity means maintaining proper diet, regular exercise and adequate rest, reducing stress and avoiding cigarettes," said Barbi Arcangel, branch pharmacist at Health Express.

In addition, good personal hygiene especially washing hands after sneezing, coughing or cleaning one's nose prevents the spread of infections like SARS.

Anna Pascual of Health Express said modern, fast-paced lifestyles rarely allow people to eat properly. "This is why several varieties of health supplements are available to boost the body's intake of nutrients to recommended levels. The best time to build immunity is now even before SARS breaks out in the Philippines," Pascual added.

Health Express carries all brands of vitamins and minerals including Lifetime Time Release C Complex (1,000 mg of Vitamin C) which helps increase the body's immunity against infection.

Other oxidants available at Health Express are Windmill Antioxidant Protection Formula, Natures Bounty Pycnogenol, Lifetime's coenzyme Q10 and Natures Bounty Garlic Oil.

Health Express stores are located at Glorietta 3, Greenbelt 1, Alabang Town Center, Festival Mall, Ermita Robinsons Galleria, Robinsons Place Novaliches, Big R Sta. Rosa, SM Davao, SM Ilolio, Robinsons Supermarket Bacolod, Robinsons Town Mall Los Baños. Call 892-7978 or 840-1855.

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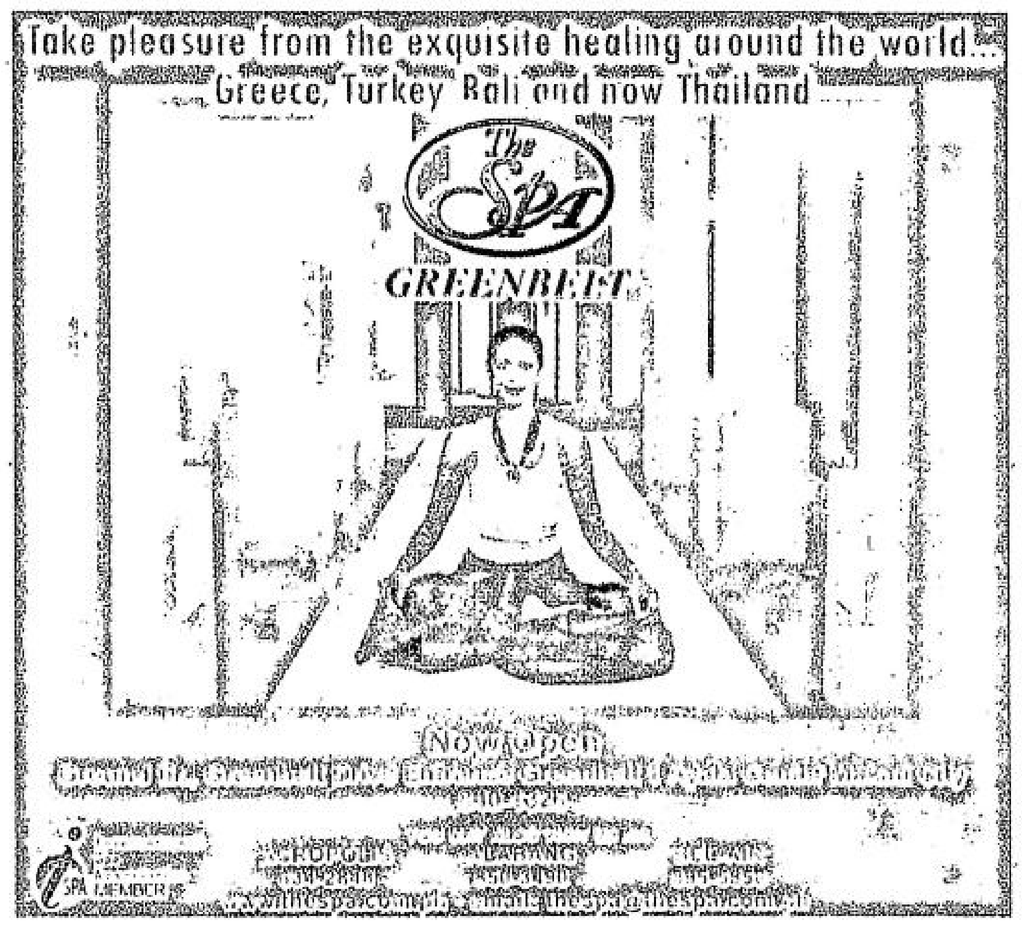
Fitness
club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The SPA
GREENBELT
Now Open
SPA MEMBER

Showcase of style and well-toned bodies

By Margie Quimpo-Espino

THE SCORCHING heat notwithstanding, Boracay was a beehive of activities last week.

President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo came to inaugurate the new getty port in Caticlan and proceeded to Boracay to dance the night away at the Seawind resort. (Too bad she came at night and did not see the ugly sight made by the boats parked on the beach front; nor the unfinished main road at the back.) The Nestea Beach Volleyball finals were also held that week; and so was the Dragon Boat rowing event.

Over 100 foreign exchange dealers were also on the island that time to hold their annual convention and R & R with former Economic Planning Secretary Solita Monsod as main speaker. (We caught Ms Monsod doing her early morning brisk walk from one end of the island to the other. She said walking had already made her lose 10 pounds.)

But, in terms of body count—or should we say bodies that count?—one event stood out last week—the Boracay Bodies Model Search 2003 on E! held at The Sun Village Beachfront Resort.

This was the second year of the event, and the traditionally quiet and peaceful part of Boracay where The Sun Village is located was once again bathed in klieg lights and music on Saturday evening.

Gorgeous candidates

The candidates arrived in batches starting Wednesday, and rehearsals were held at least twice a day. Robbie Carmona directed the program, which opened with a colorful production number from 27 gorgeous males and females, followed by a dazzling showcase of poise, style and well-toned bodies highlighted by the exclusive resort wear creations of Frederick Peralta.

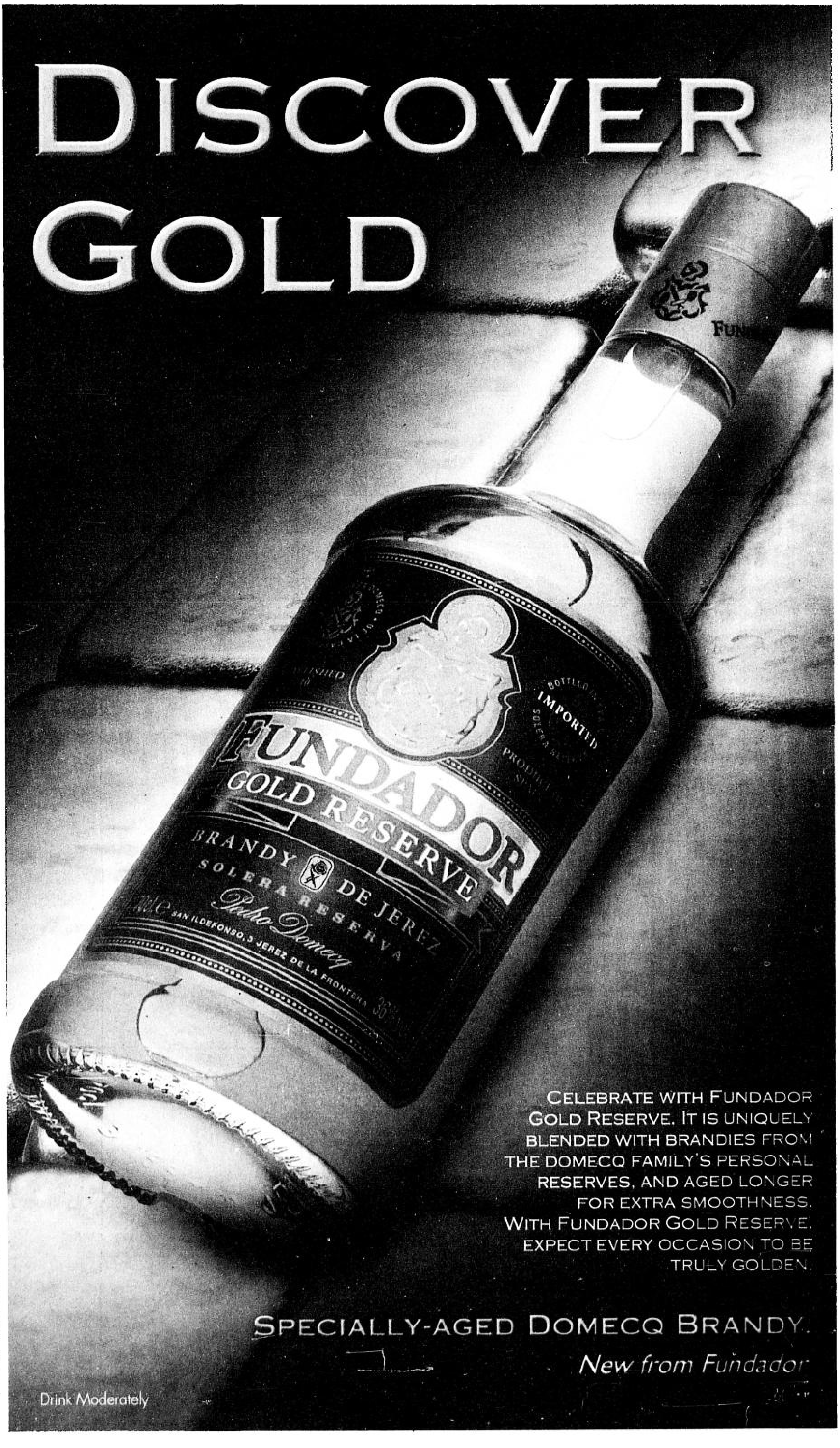
For the competition, Peralta came up with a fabulous collection that included military-themed resort wear for the guys and a Japanese-inspired finale ensemble.

TV personalities Hans Montenegro, who was inseparable from his current flame, Maritoni Fernandez, and Lana Asanin hosted the event, which was covered by E! Philippines' Diane Sison. The show will be aired via a sum-

SHOWCASE/ D3

BORACAY
MS BORACAY BODIES

MR. and Ms Boracay Bodies 2003 Alexander Cenzon and Elaine Matawaran


DISCOVER GOLD

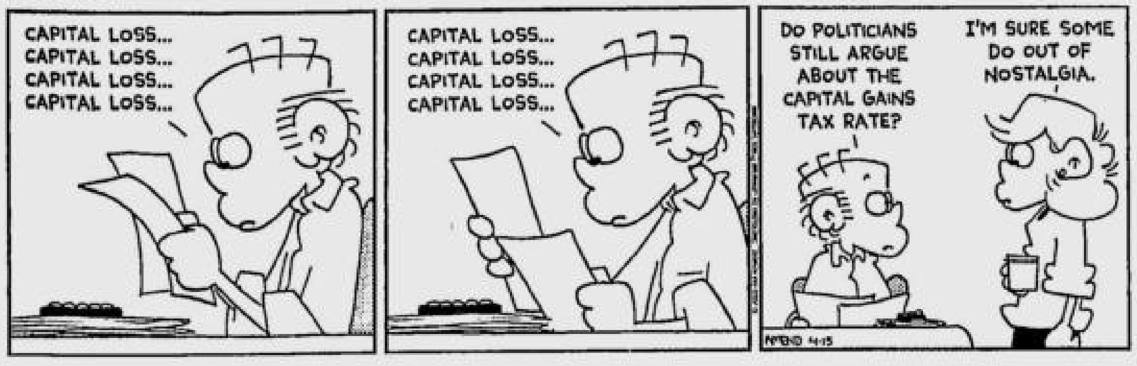
CELEBRATE WITH FUNDADOR GOLD RESERVE. IT IS UNIQUELY BLENDED WITH BRANDIES FROM THE DOMECQ FAMILY'S PERSONAL RESERVES, AND AGED LONGER FOR EXTRA SMOOTHNESS. WITH FUNDADOR GOLD RESERVE, EXPECT EVERY OCCASION TO BE TRULY GOLDEN.

SPECIALLY-AGED DOMECQ BRANDY.
New from Fundador

Drink Moderately

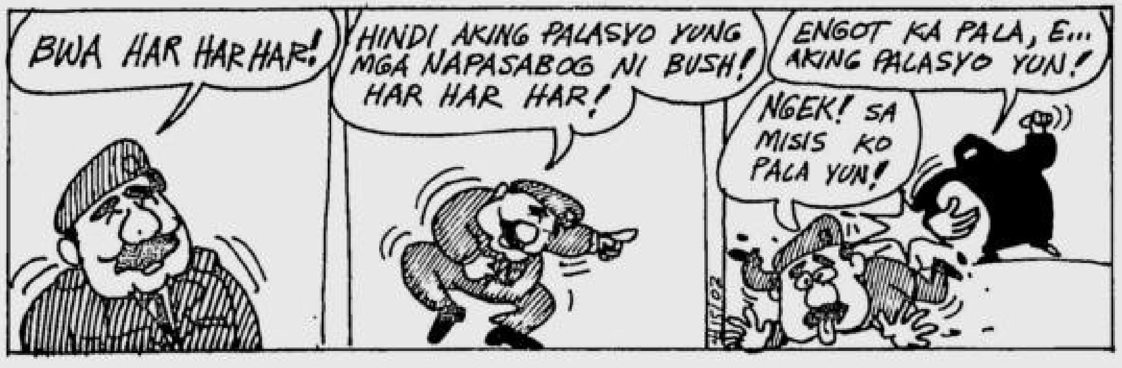
FOXTROT

BY BILL AMEND


CAPITAL LOSS... CAPITAL LOSS... CAPITAL LOSS... CAPITAL LOSS...
CAPITAL LOSS... CAPITAL LOSS... CAPITAL LOSS... CAPITAL LOSS...
DO POLITICIANS STILL ARGUE ABOUT THE CAPITAL GAINS TAX RATE?
I'M SURE SOME DO OUT OF NOSTALGIA.
AMEND 4-15

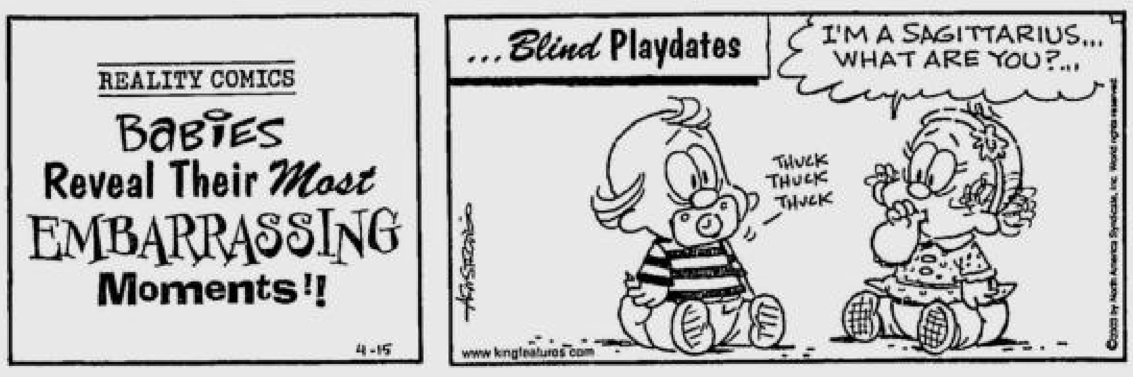
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


BWA HAR HAR HAR!
HINDI AKING PALASYO YUNG MGA NAPASABOG NI BUSH! HAR HAR HAR!
ENGOT KA PALA, E... AKING PALASYO YUN!
NGEK! SA MISIS KO PALA YUN!

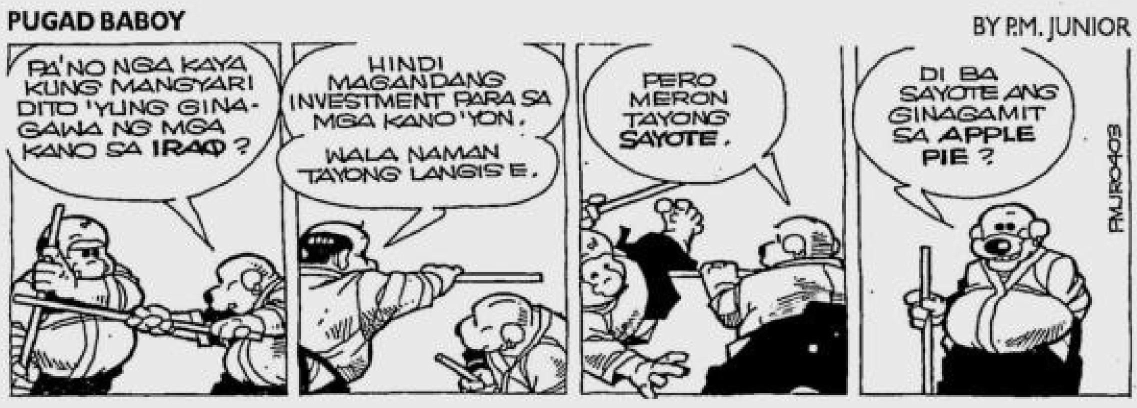
MARVIN

BY TOM ARMSTRONG


REALITY COMICS
Babies Reveal Their Most EMBARRASSING Moments!!
4-15
...Blind Playdates
I'M A SAGITTARIUS... WHAT ARE YOU?...
THUCK THUCK THUCK
www.kingfeatures.com

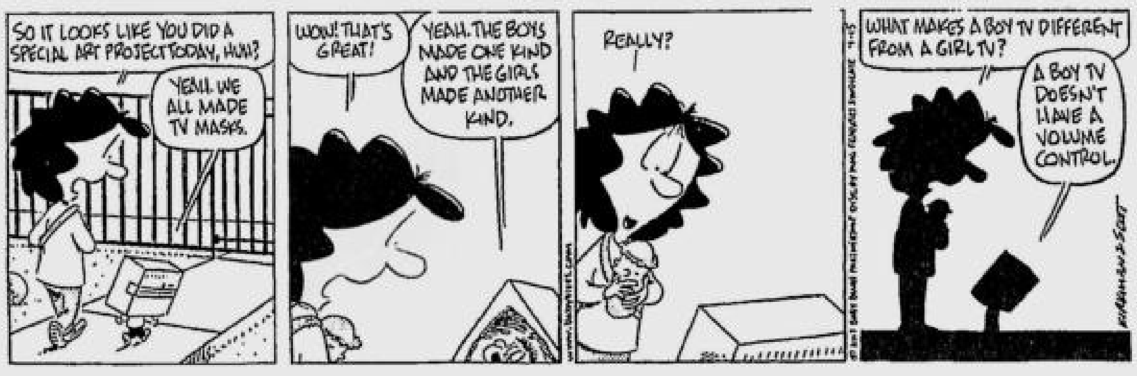
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


PA'NO NGA KAYA KUNG MANGYARI DITO 'YUNG GINA-GAWA NG MGA KANO SA IRAQ?
HINDI MAGANDANG INVESTMENT PARA SA MGA KANO 'YON.
WALA NAMAN TAYONG LANGIS E.
PERO MERON TAYONG SAYOTE.
DI BA SAYOTE ANG GINAGAMIT SA APPLE PIE?
PMJR0403

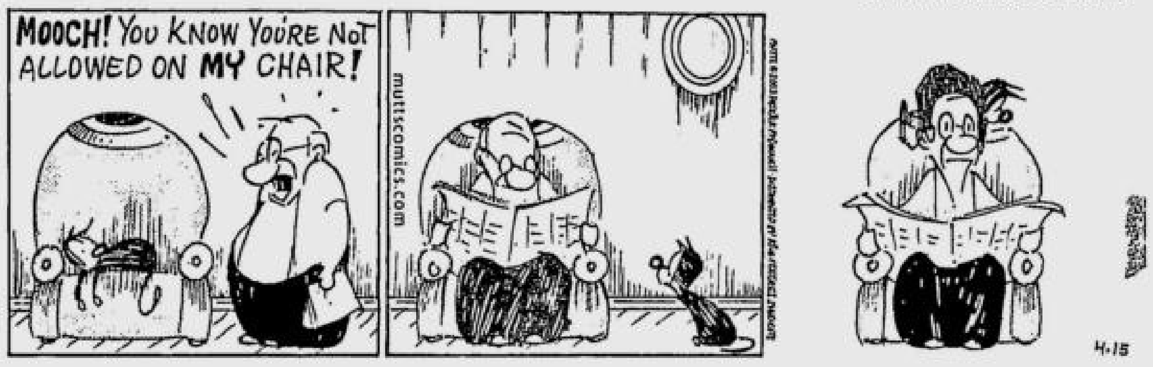
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


SO IT LOOKS LIKE YOU DID A SPECIAL ART PROJECT TODAY, HUH?
YEAH. WE ALL MADE TV MASKS.
WOW! THAT'S GREAT!
YEAH. THE BOYS MADE ONE KIND AND THE GIRLS MADE ANOTHER KIND.
REALLY?
WHAT MAKES A BOY TV DIFFERENT FROM A GIRL TV?
A BOY TV DOESN'T HAVE A VOLUME CONTROL.

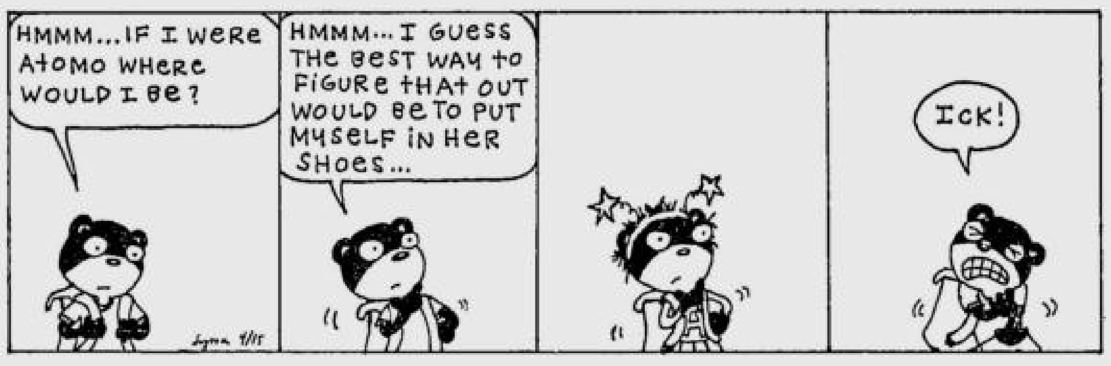
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


MOOCH! YOU KNOW YOU'RE NOT ALLOWED ON MY CHAIR!
muttscomics.com
4-15

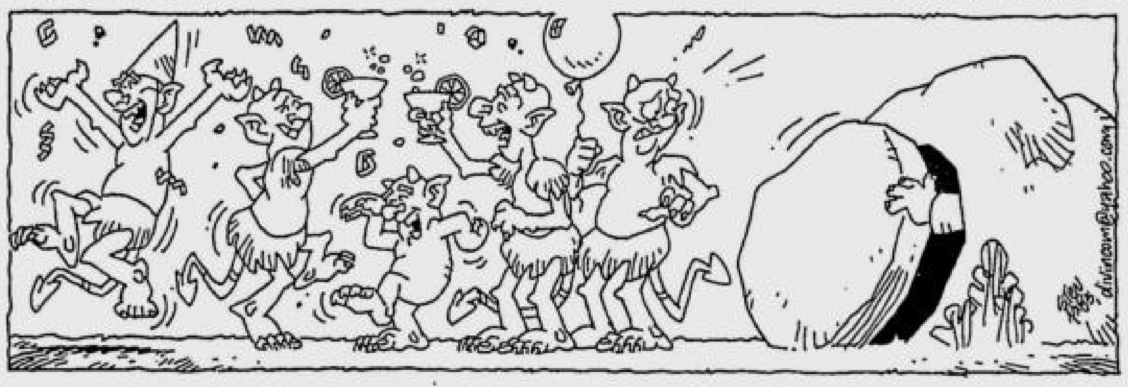
ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


HMMM...IF I WERE ATOMO WHERE WOULD I BE?
HMMM...I GUESS THE BEST WAY TO FIGURE THAT OUT WOULD BE TO PUT MYSELF IN HER SHOES...
ICK!
Lyra 4/15

DIVINE COMEDY

BY STEVEN PABALINAS


divinecom@yahoo.com

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: You are generous with your time and your money. People are attracted to you because of your humor and your love of life. You are loyal to your friends and tolerant of the faults of your loved ones. You have dreams you want to attain. There is something important that you must learn this year.
Birthdate of: Ellen Barkin, actress; Charlie Chaplin, actor; Lukas Haas, actor.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): It's hard to know whom to put first today: yourself or someone else. Be patient with others; let them speak first. When the Full Moon is opposite your sign, give others the benefit of the doubt.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): You will have to give in to the demands of the government or large organizations today. There's no way that you can get your way. Accept what is happening, and accept it gracefully.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): You are forced to listen to the demands of the group today. There's no point in waving your own flag; you will be overruled. (Later in the week is another thing.)

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): Avoid difficult conversations with authority figures or parents today. And while you're at it, avoid being a difficult authority figure or parent, as well.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Others will not listen to your opinion today. You do not have to change your mind; simply accept the fact that you have to agree to disagree.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Your focus right now is on shared possessions, joint property and things that other people own. Try to sort these matters out so that you're clear about them from now on.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Just go with the flow today. The Full Moon is in your sign, and you don't like nasty confrontations. Mellow out and hide behind a mask of agreement.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Tension with a romantic partner about shared possessions might cause you to be impatient with people at work today. Just remember what the source of your concern is.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): Partners or parents might be strict with children today. This is not the day to prove who is boss. Be patient and cooperative, because it's a Full Moon.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): Today's Full Moon focuses on family, real estate and your private life. You don't have to make changes today—just cope as smoothly as you can.

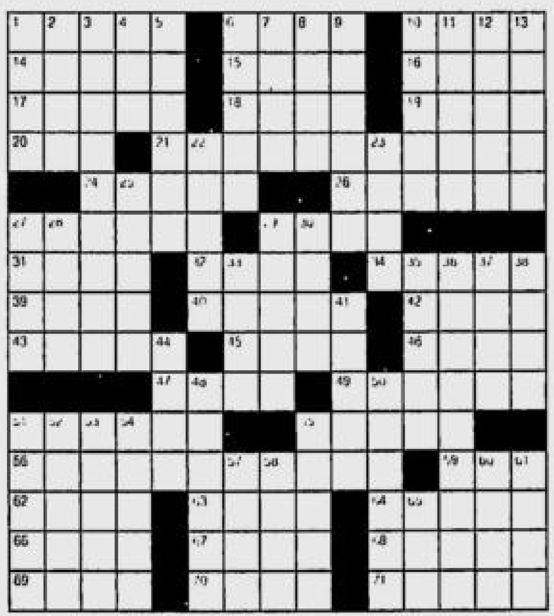
AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Be tactful in conversations with siblings and neighbors. Your concern about money and possessions might have nothing to do with them. Then again, it might. But you don't know.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Avoid important financial discussions today. It's hard for you to be objective and clear about things. Today's Full Moon is mildly stressful.

DAILY CROSSWORD

ACROSS
1 Rubes
6 Singing syllables
10 Necklace fastener
14 Not with it
15 Former spouses
16 Bancroft or Boleyn
17 Actress Garbo
18 Woe is me!
19 Octagonal sign's word
20 "For __ a jolly..."
21 Patient's record
24 So __!
26 Gems
27 Misleading attractions
29 Europe's neighbor
31 Particle
32 Oops!
34 Zsa Zsa or Eva
39 Pineapple brand
40 Part of USNA
42 Wander
43 Conductor Previn
45 Similar to
46 Cart pullers
47 Computer giant
49 Classify
51 Calamitous
55 Succinct
56 Move at a clip
59 Hair of the dog
62 Brainstorm
63 Pint drinks
64 Racket
66 Lemon peel
67 Egyptian fertility goddess
68 Shaped like a rainbow
69 Overdo the mothering
70 Glowing
71 Lascivious looks

DOWN
1 Grant or Downs
2 About
3 Congested condition
4 Baby fox
5 "Seven" co-star
6 Tenancy period
7 Rod between wheels
8 Jacob's wife
9 Birthplace of St. Francis
10 Must
11 Playwright Chekhov
12 Sleep soundly?
13 Diarist Samuel
22 Burning crime
23 Without a date
25 Simpson pop
27 Art of the absurd
28 Type of jacket or collar
29 Blacksmith's block
30 Make wet
33 Corridor
35 Popped up
36 Ticket kiosk
37 Finished
38 Cloth tear
41 Memorize
44 Actress Falco
48 Cream-filled dessert
50 Meaningful gesture
51 Model T's descendant
52 Active starter?
53 Looks __ everything
54 Test score
55 Domineering
57 Plus
58 Honolulu garlands
60 __-friendly
61 Checkers side
65 Mineral in the raw



By Norma Steinberg
San Francisco, CA
4/15/03

Monday's Puzzle Solved

B	R	I	M	■	I	M	A	M	S	■	B	R	E	R
R	O	S	A	■	N	O	N	E	T	■	L	E	N	A
A	U	L	D	■	F	U	D	D	Y	D	U	D	D	Y
D	E	E	R	■	L	E	S	E	■	E	R	O	S	E
■	■	■	I	D	O	■	■	■	E	B	B	■	■	■
Y	E	L	L	O	W	B	E	L	L	Y	■	S	R	S
E	L	L	E	N	■	A	N	A	L	E	P	T	I	C
A	L	A	N	■	C	U	T	I	S	■	L	A	V	A
T	I	M	E	S	H	E	E	T	■	D	A	R	E	R
S	S	A	■	H	U	R	R	Y	S	C	U	R	R	Y
■	■	■	T	A	B	■	■	■	T	I	S	■	■	■
A	L	O	U	D	■	M	E	S	A	■	I	R	I	S
D	I	L	L	Y	D	A	L	L	Y	■	B	A	D	E
D	E	L	I	■	E	N	S	U	E	■	L	I	L	A
S	N	A	P	■	B	E	A	R	D	■	E	D	E	N

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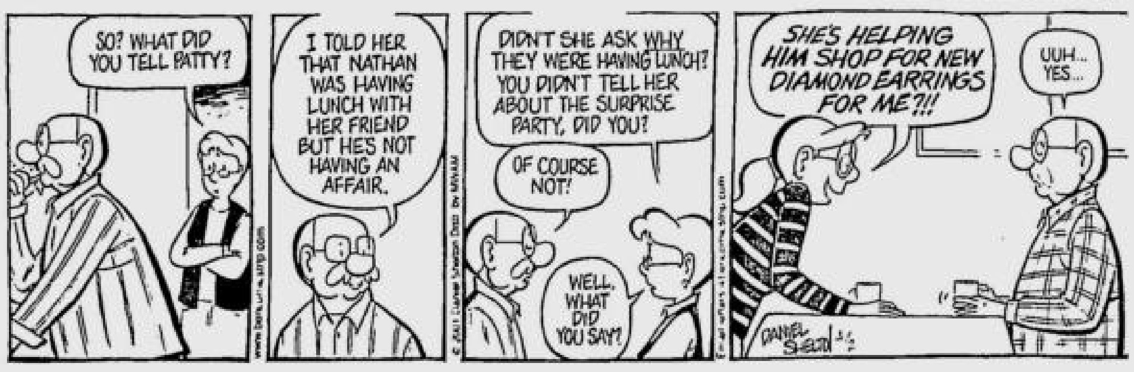
4/15/03

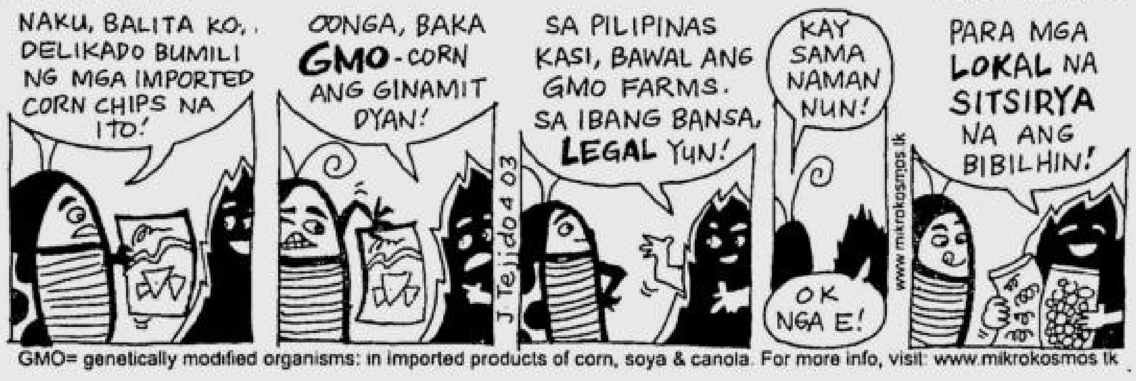
BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


SO? WHAT DID YOU TELL PATTY?
I TOLD HER THAT NATHAN WAS HAVING LUNCH WITH HER FRIEND BUT HE'S NOT HAVING AN AFFAIR.
DIDN'T SHE ASK WHY THEY WERE HAVING LUNCH? YOU DIDN'T TELL HER ABOUT THE SURPRISE PARTY, DID YOU?
OF COURSE NOT!
WELL, WHAT DID YOU SAY?
SHE'S HELPING HIM SHOP FOR NEW DIAMOND EARRINGS FOR ME?!!
UUH... YES...
DANIEL SHELTON

MIKROKOSMOS

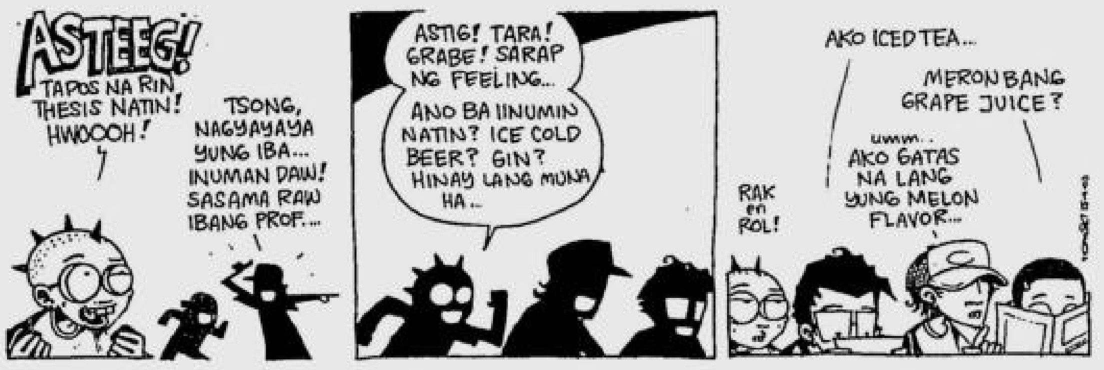
BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


NAKU, BALITA KO, DELIKADO BUMILI NG MGA IMPORTED CORN CHIPS NA ITO!
OONGA, BAKA GMO-CORN ANG GINAMIT DYAN!
SA PILIPINAS KASI, BAWAL ANG GMO FARMS. SA IBANG BANSA, LEGAL YUN!
KAY SAMA NAMAN NUN!
OK NGA E!
PARA MGA LOKAL NA SITSIRYA NA ANG BIBILHIN!
J Tejido 4 03
www.mikrokosmos.tk

GMO= genetically modified organisms: in imported products of corn, soya & canola. For more info, visit: www.mikrokosmos.tk

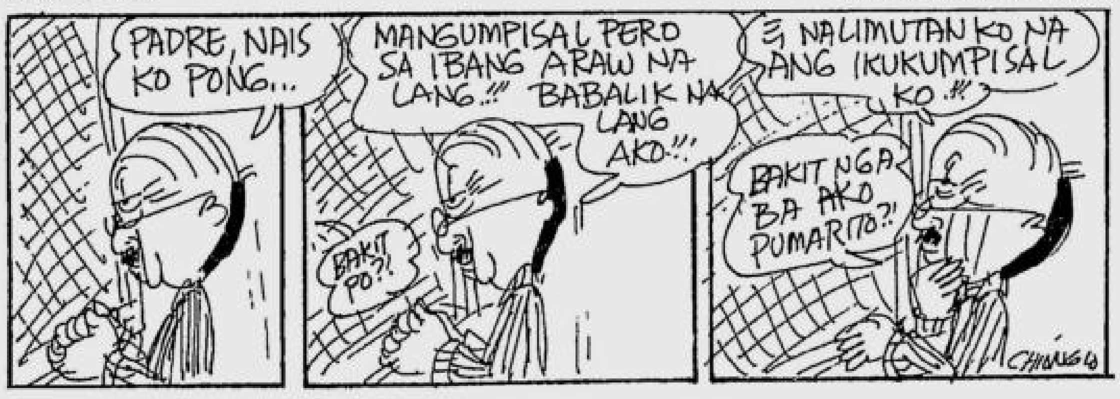
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


ASTEEG! TAPOS NA RIN THESIS NATIN! HWOOOH!
TSONG, NAGYAYAYA YUNG IBA... INUMAN DAW! SASAMA RAW IBANG PROF...
ASTIG! TARA! GRABE! SARAP NG FEELING...
ANO BA IINUMIN NATIN? ICE COLD BEER? GIN? HINAY LANG MUNA HA...
AKO ICED TEA...
MERON BANG GRAPE JUICE?
UMM.. AKO GATAS NA LANG YUNG MELON FLAVOR...
RAK en ROL!

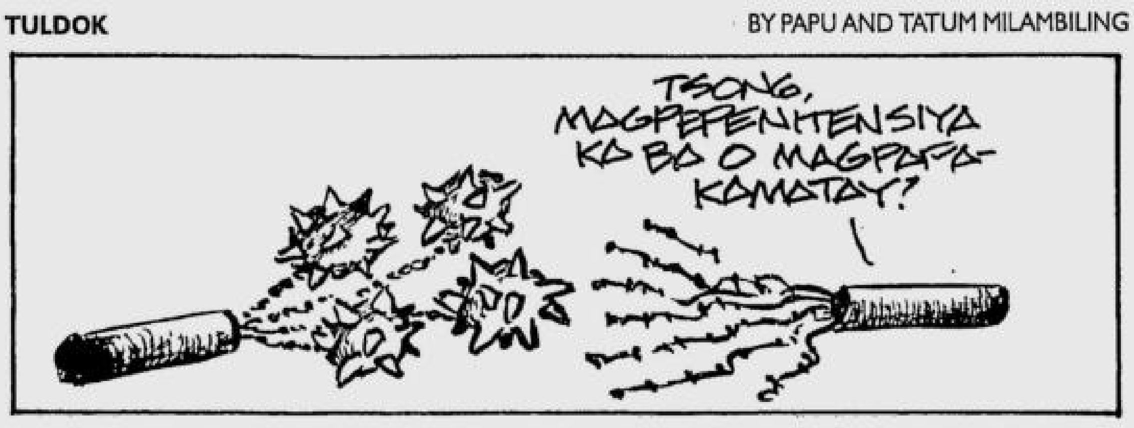
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


PADRE, NAIS KO PONG...
MANGUMPISAL PERO SA IBANG ARAW NA LANG!!! BABALIK NA LANG AKO!!!
BAKIT PO?!
NALIMUTAN KO NA ANG IKUKUMPISAL KO!!!
BAKIT NGA BA AKO PUMARITO?!
CHIONGLO

TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


TSONG, MAGPEPENITENSIYA KA BA O MAGPAPA-KAMATAY?

Showcase of style and well-toned *bodies*

In terms of body count, or bodies that count, Boracay Bodies Model Search 2003 on E! at The Sun Village Beachfront Resort stood out

From page D1

mer TV special soon.

Quick-paced

The program was quick-paced and before you knew it, Mr. and Ms Boracay had been "sashed."

The winners of Mr. and Ms Boracay Bodies were unanimously chosen by both the judges and the contestants themselves.

The 6'2", 200-pound Alexander Cenzon of Baguio City bagged the male title of the Boracay Bodies Model Search 2003, while Elaine Matawaran, who bears a slight resemblance to Catherine Zeta-Jones, bested the 12 other ladies.

First runners-up were G-Ford Lara and Tiffany Gonzales, while Rico Barrera and Deanna Valero were second runners-up.

The judges included Rep. Gabrielle Calizo of Aklan, fashion designer Frederick Peralta, social arbiter Maurice Arcache; Louis Vuitton country manager Gigi Mabanta, Philips Consumer Electronics country manager Angelo Valenton, Singapore-based consultant for Philips TV Michael Change, this writer, and E! Philippines head of operations Lito Cruz.

Also, party impresario and owner of McSandro Louie Cruz, Dos Mestizo's Binggoy Remedio, Sun Star Bacolod Leisure editor Edouard Garcia, Bora Spa consultant Hong Dong-Su, Lynn Turner of The Orchids Resort and Southeast Asian Airlines marketing manager Glenn Lamela.

Aside from bagging the title, Cenzon also walked away with special awards, including Sunniest Personality and Mr. Seair-Metro Manila.

The other special awards went to Tiffany Gonzales, Ms Seair-Metro Manila and Best in Resort Wear-female division.

Tristan Aguirre won Mr. Seair Visayas-Mindanao and Mr. Photogenic; Deana Valero, Ms Photogenic; Vanessa Rivera, Ms Seair Visayas-Mindanao. Ryan Silverio and Theresa Gavieres were Best in Swimwear. G-Ford Lara and Cel Celis were Palangga's Choices, aptly-named special awards given personally by Maurice Arcache to the most gracious candidates.

Mr. and Ms Boracay Bodies were awarded cash prizes and watches from Longines, flat TVs from Philips, exclusive beach wear from Frederick Peralta, and all-expense-paid trips to Boracay with accommodations at The Sun Village Beachfront Resort.

Boracay Bodies Model Search 2003 on E! was a production of Fuentes Publicity Network Inc. and sponsored by the Southeast Asian Airlines, The B Salon, The Orchids Resort, Club Bazzura, Dish and Barcelo Sarabia Manor Hotel and Convention Center.

The Sun Village

CANDIDATES in Boracay Bodies Model Search 2003 pose before The Sun Village Beachfront Resort

EDD Fuentes, Aklan Rep. Gabrielle Calizo, Louis Vuitton country manager Gigi Mabanta and Louie Cruz

FREDERICK Peralta, the author and Maurice Arcache

ELEN Torres and Michael Chang of Philips Consumer Electronics

MILA Gelvezon of United Airlines and Katrina Panlilio-Craig with her son

ABERCROMBIE

LANA Asanin and Devin Villarama

HANS Montenegro and Maritoni Fernandez

How to slim down for that cool swimsuit

PRESSURED by the bathing-suit season? Well, it's not yet too late to fit into the skimpiest swimsuits of your dreams. Weigh Less Center offers these "10 Commandments" for a leaner and meaner you:

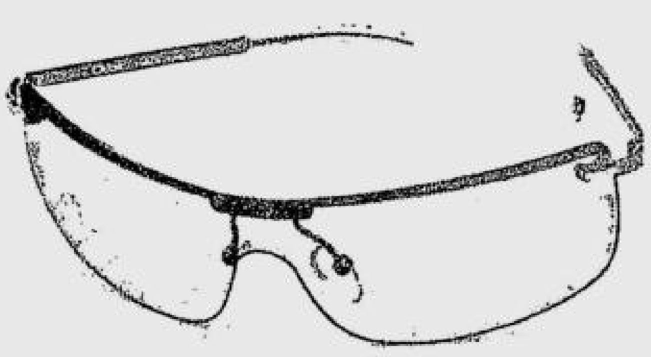
1. Make reachable goals, and closely monitor your progress by keeping a journal of what you eat and a regular record of your weight.
2. Watch less TV. A study published in the March 2001 "Archives of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine" showed that children who watched more television have increased risks for obesity. Television does not only expose viewers to more food commercials, but also take time away that may be otherwise spent on exercise.
3. Drink plenty of water. Water is still the best thirst-quencher, and it has zero calories (unlike regular soft drinks and fruit juices). Drink 12-16 ounces of water with every meal, and try carrying a bottle of water with you, especially when you're on the road or at the beach.
4. Choose green tea over coffee. Green tea is known for its antioxidant benefits.
5. We usually try to stay away from meats for the most part of the Lenten season. Not only is it a healthier decision, eating more fresh produce will help you reach your goal faster.
6. Avoid fasting or skipping meals, especially breakfast, as it will only make you prone to eating larger food portions later. Space meals and snacks three to four hours apart. Split a sandwich with a friend, order a cup of soup instead of a bowl, or opt for an appetizer portion at dinner instead of an entree.
7. Don't shop for food when hungry, and always opt for low-fat, low-calorie food items.
8. Skip the skin or fatty portions of meat.
9. Eat less rice, and keep away from junk food.
10. Avoid trying fad diets that promise quick weight-loss results. More often than not, they will only be temporary, or even have unhealthy side effects. Consult a certified health professional to develop for you a long-term weight-loss plan.

Eye-catching shades for sunny season

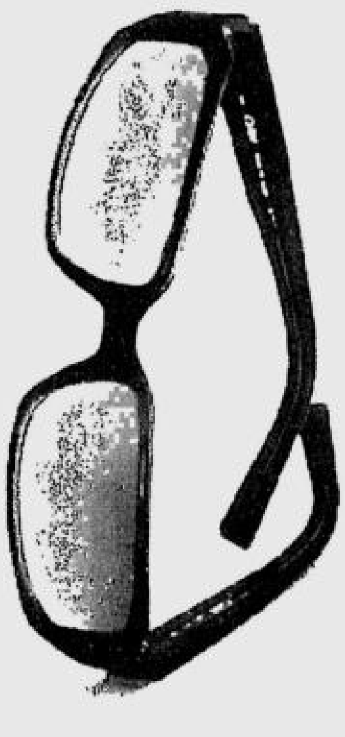
CHLOE'S eyewear collection for the summer features tones of blue, olive green, brick and fume, metallic frames that follow first a straight line and then slightly concave. The polycarbonate is illuminated by claret, blue shading to violet, amber, red and antique rose.

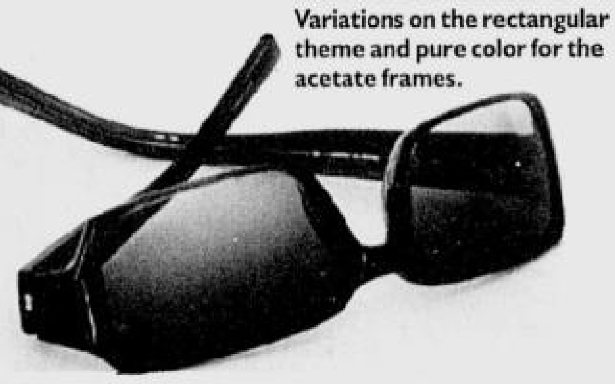
Rectangular shapes aim at new angles, delineating profiles in thick gloss acetate with the help of colors like dark Havana brown, olive or blue, and black.

The frames collections return to the classic by designing oval variants with steel wires: lengthened, rounded, "cat's eye," almond shape. The design, available in hues of aviation grey, chestnut, rose, claret, palladium white, "conceals" the performance: flex sides and elastic joint hinges, to sustain rims with a soft and progressive curve, or also sharp toward the ends.



MODEL 103S. An eccentric spirit, reflected in the metal mask which reveals the eyes behind the closefitting profile of the lenses.





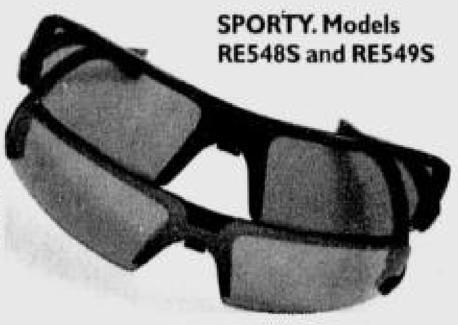
MODELS 108S and 109S. Variations on the rectangular theme and pure color for the acetate frames.

THE REPLAY eyewear collection features sporty and classic shades with a very close-fitting shape and lenses cut to become as one with the frame, transforming the glasses into an expression of the avant-garde.

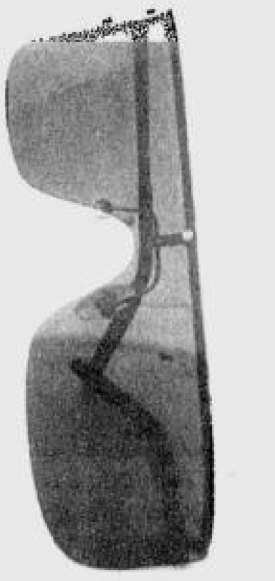
Frames in gloss blue, matt neutral transparent or gloss grey go with lenses in shades of blue/antique rose, orange/yellow, progressively shaded gold and silver.

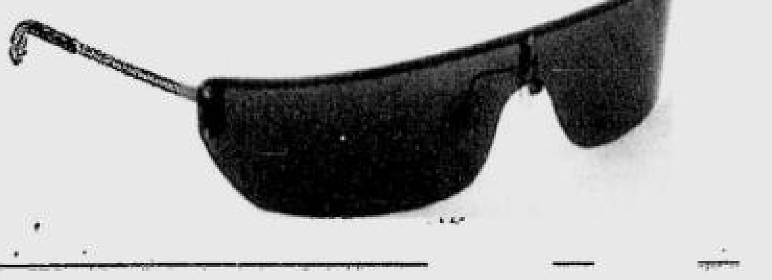
Some models are characterized by metal. Full colors are added to the regular palette, for instance ochre, salmon, solid orange, contrasting with anthracite which dominates the frame.

The masks, on the other hand, start with the softer, more rounded version (which ushers in the pewter shade of the metal frame to enhance the golden transparency of lenses.)

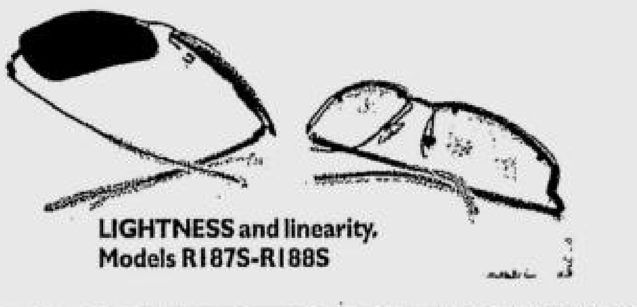


SPORTY. Models RE548S and RE549S

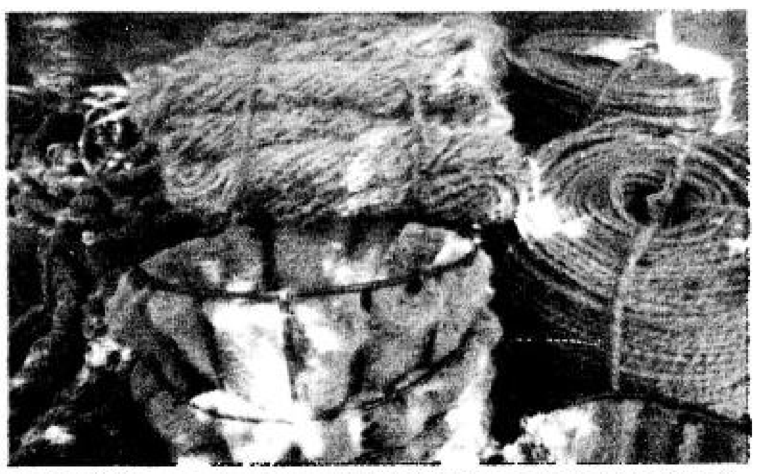




MODELS R185S-R186S—extra close fitting unisex mask

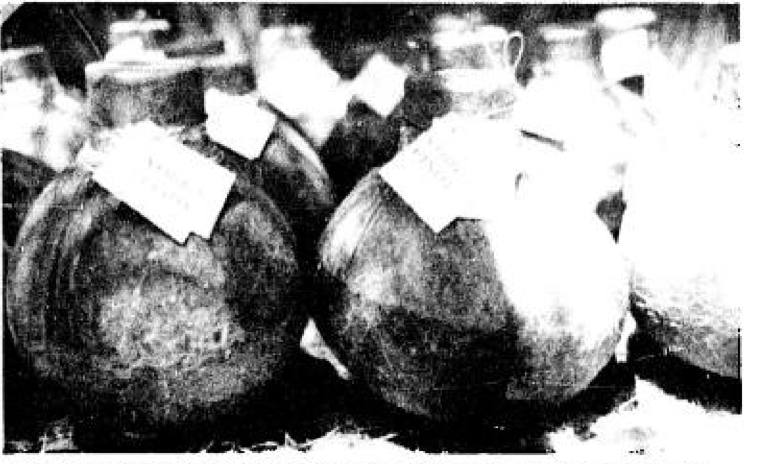


LIGHTNESS and linearity. Models R187S-R188S



PRODUCTS made from coco fiber include ropes, sponges and mesh nets

FLOWER pots made of coco dust, from Cervantes Technologies, Inc.



COCONUT-BASED Pinoy vodka from Cervantes Technologies, Inc.

They're getting dirty in San Pablo

The city's weekend fair will show that an environment-friendly lifestyle isn't simply about growing and eating organic produce

Text by Linda B. Bolido
Photos by Joan Bondoc

FOR one weekend, April 26-27, people will get dirty in San Pablo City in Laguna.

No, they will not stop bathing, wallow in the mud or forget to change their clothes. What they will do is try to establish a closer connection to earth and pay homage to Mother Nature.

"Let's Get Dirty," as the weekend organic garden fair to be held at Barangay Sta. Cruz (Putol) is called, will showcase not just chemical-free food production but an entire lifestyle that is more environment-friendly.

Being the brainchild of the San Pablo chapter of the Organic Producers Trade Association (Opta), primary focus, of course, will be on sustainably grown farm produce. But it will also introduce ecologically safe ways for comfortable, even luxurious, living.

From food production to garbage disposal, the fair will demonstrate that an environment-friendly lifestyle isn't simply about organic farm produce. Neither does it mean living in tree houses and making like Tarzan or roughing it the way participants in the reality television show, "Survivor," do.

Going by the list of 40 fair exhibitors, one can safely say being kind to nature does not have to mean giving up one's comfort and convenience or being culturally clueless.

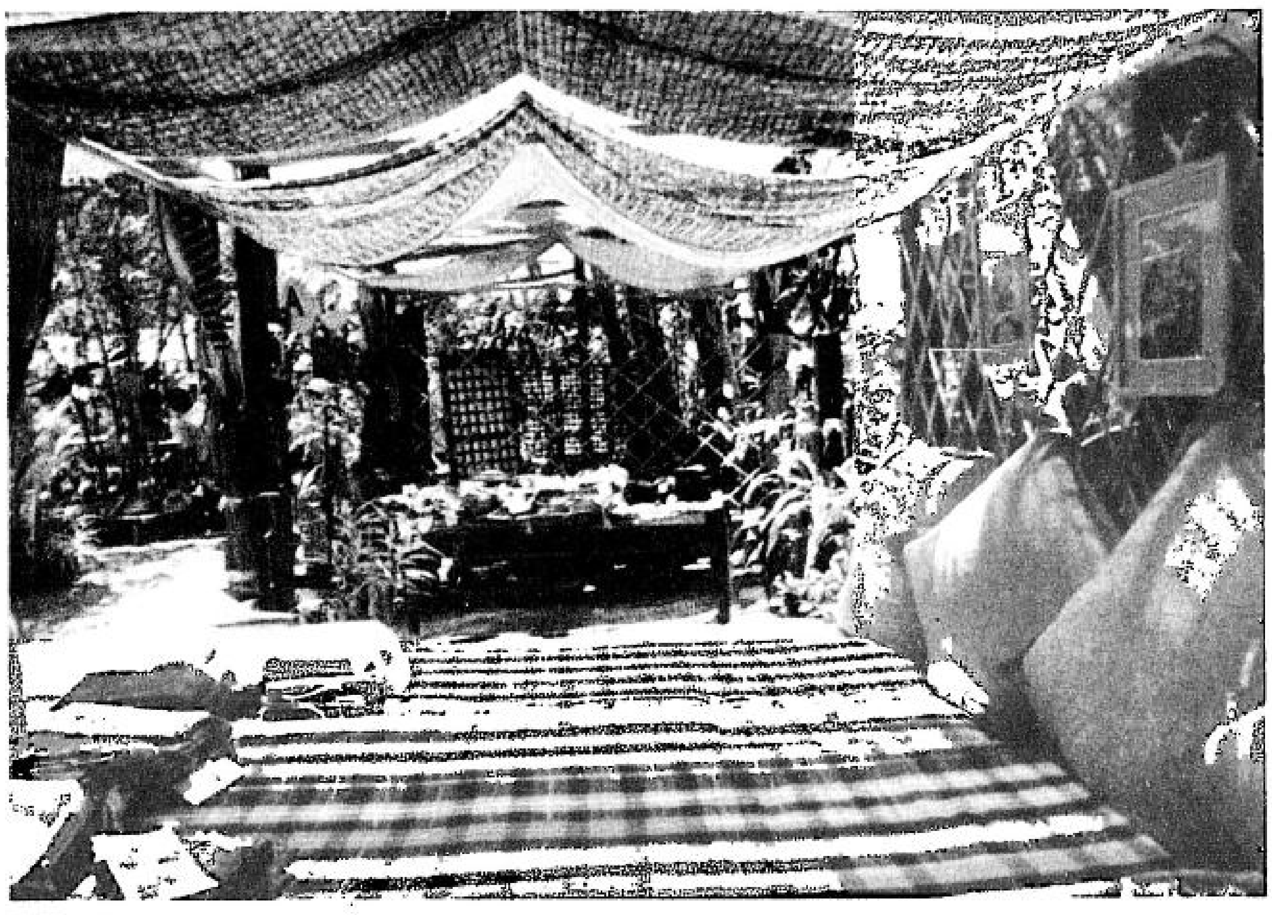
The fair features chemical-free produce as well as items made of by-products of agricultural processes or recycled waste. It will have handicraft and native delicacies, wine and art works, plants and home décor, garden accents and jewelry, birds and antiques.

Swiss sausages and raclette can be enjoyed alongside Laguna's signature dishes.

Relaxing massages will be offered as well as palm reading, feng shui consultation and fortune telling.

There will be homegrown businesses like Carlito's, a restaurant-cum-art gallery owned by Carlito Ortega; the Patio Verde Ihaw-ihaw restaurant of Gary Alcalde; Collete's Buko Pie of Ed de la Cruz; Soriano Multi-Purpose Fiber Corporation of Francisco O. Soriano; Cervantes Technologies, Inc. of Beth Cervantes.

Visiting exhibitors include the Patis Boutique of Patis Tesoro; Home Design of Ernest Santiago; Liliw Products/Orencia's Uraro; Agreptek Co. of Luis Viscocho.



PATIS Boutique will sell both local fabrics and mosquito nets from the Visayas and saris from India.

Close to Mother Nature

Aside from scheduled seminars, visitors may consult exhibitors on topics like how to grow organic chicken, make organic salad dressings or simply start an organic garden. They will also get an update on efforts to save and revive the city's seven lakes.

Agreptek will demonstrate the operation of its P2.25 million rapid bio-waste converter, which can turn 1,000 kilos of biodegradable waste into dry, odorless dust and pellets in one hour. The machine's output can be used in soil preparation or as fertilizer a few days later.

A jazz band will play at 4 p.m. during the two-day fair.

Although organic garden fairs are now common, "Let's Get Dirty" has the distinction of being held next door to Mother Nature, not in some place surrounded by concrete, glass and steel. Booths will be arranged close to a lone mango tree in the middle of a 3,500-sq m *lanzones* grove, which also has a stream.

Fashion designer and organic farmer Tesoro, a member of Opta San Pablo City said, "We've set up this garden event so people would notice the difference a fresh, nature setting brings to their lives, and [to] make time for it."

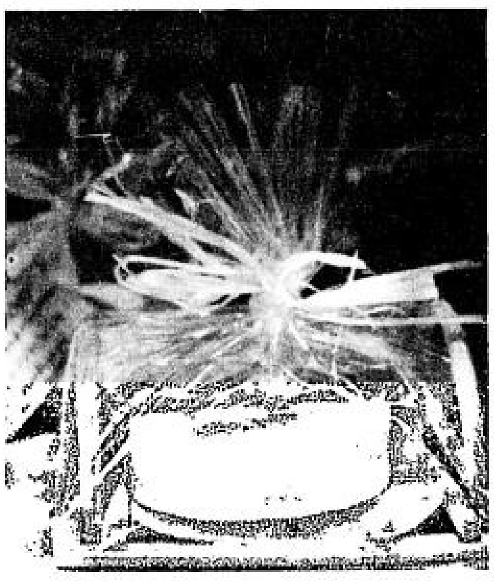
Tesoro, who leases the *lanzones* grove, said people had to realize how enjoyable it was to have a fresh, clean environment so they would be encouraged to protect and maintain it.

She worked with other Opta members, Mandy Mariño, Alcalde, Gelo Adriano, Ortega, Frank Soriano and Ric Bartolome to organize the fair. The group invited lifestyle designers Santiago and Robert Borja to help set up the show using their distinctive styles.

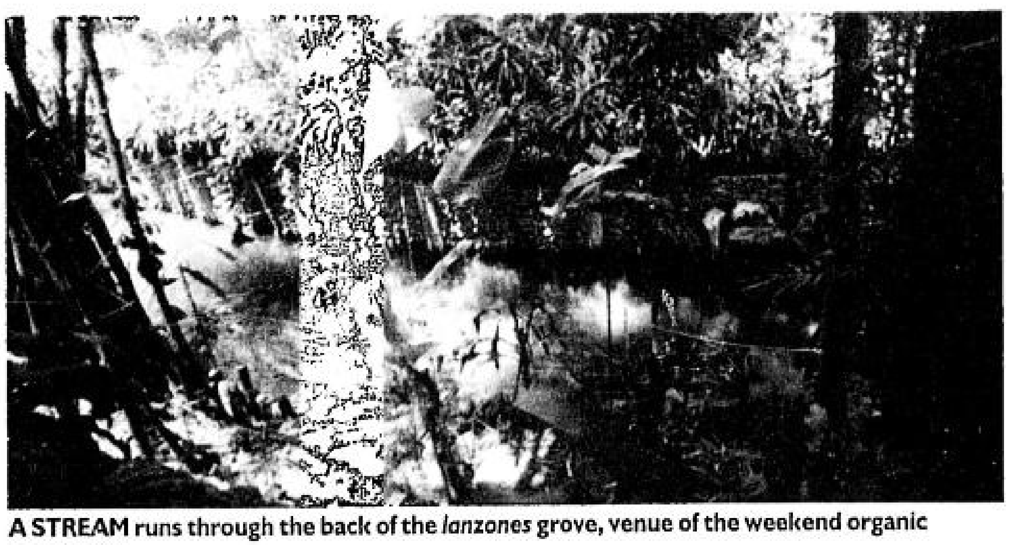
E-mail the author at linda@fatmails.com

EXTRA-VIRGIN COCO OIL
Absolutely no artificial ingredients

EXTRA virgin coco oil from Cervantes Technologies, Inc.



HERBAL soap, with coconut base, also from Cervantes Technologies, Inc.



A STREAM runs through the back of the *lanzones* grove, venue of the weekend organic garden fair.

PATIS Tesoro's house, a mix-match of features from old Filipino houses, is next door to the fair venue and will be among the attractions of the weekend exhibition

Take Charge Doc!
Nicky S. Montoya, M.D.
MEDICard

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Meet your MEDICard Team

In need of a Medical Oncologist? Then visit **Dr. Monica Geraldine P. Jurilla**, our accredited specialist based at Makati Medical Center. Doc Monica is a Medicine graduate of the University of Santo Tomas. She chose to specialize in Internal Medicine, finishing her residency training at Makati Medical Center. She also subspecializes in Medical Oncology, which she took at St. Luke's Medical Center. MEDICard members may visit her clinic at Room 226 for consultations every Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 9 AM to 12 noon.

The President and Medical Director of St. Elizabeth Hospital **Dr. Jesus C. Veneracion**, is also MEDICard's Medical Coordinator for the hospital. Dr. Veneracion has been an accredited medical provider since the beginnings of the HMO in 1987. His career in the medical field began after graduating "Doctor of Medicine" at Manila Central University. He then later chose to specialize in General Surgery, finishing his residency training at St. Elizabeth Hospital in Chicago, Illinois, USA. Today he is a Fellow to both the Philippine College of Surgeons and the International College of Surgeons. For all your medical needs at St. Elizabeth Hospital, National Highway, General Santos City, look for MEDICard Medical Coordinator, Dr. Jesus Veneracion.

Dental healthcare specialist, **Jerry Chun Alejandrino** joined MEDICard in 1999. Doc Jerry is a Dentistry graduate of the Lyceum Northwestern University. He is a Member of the Philippine Dental Association, the Philippine Academy of Aesthetic Dentistry and the Pangasinan Dental Society. He spends most of his "off-clinic hours" by reading the Bible, quality time with children, playing basketball and cooking. For your dental healthcare needs, visit the Alejandrino Dental Clinic, 2/F Room B-10, Malimgas Public Market, A.B. Fernandez Ave., Dagupan City. Clinic hours are from Mondays to Saturdays from 9 AM to 6 PM.

We encourage all MEDICard members to voice out their concerns and issues at hand. BE HEARD AND BE READ. You can write DR. NICKY S. MONTOYA at 9/F Sagittarius Bldg. H.V. De la Costa St., Salcedo Village, Makati City or e-mail him at inquiry@medicardphils.com. For feedback on availment of our services, e-mail us at feedback@medicardphils.com.

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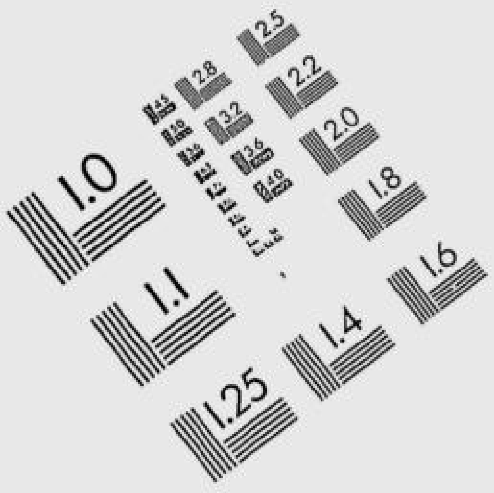
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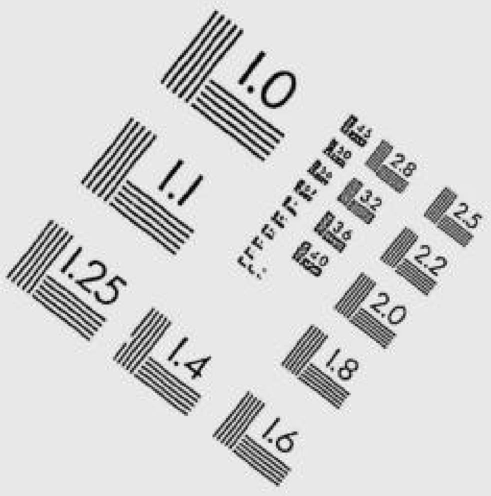
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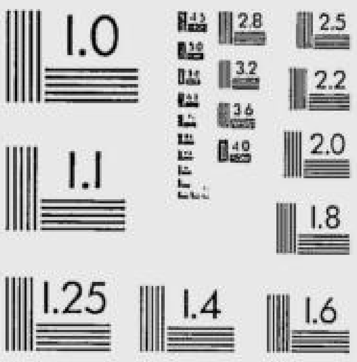
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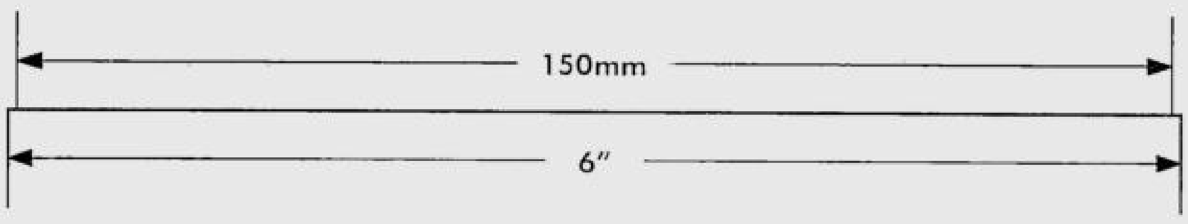

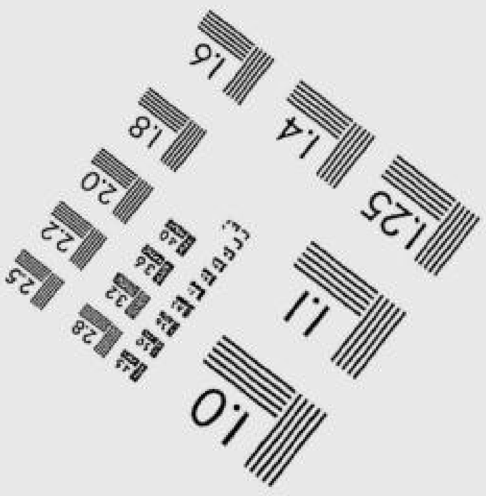
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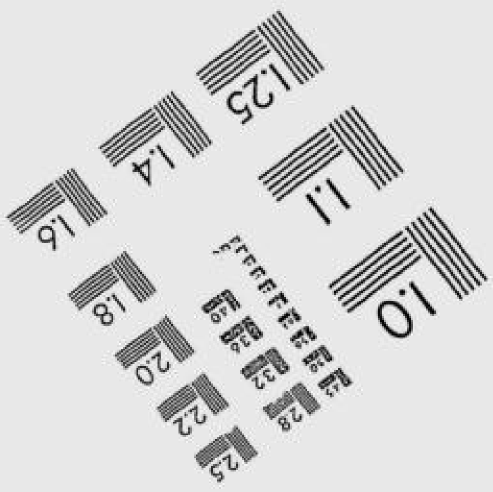
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